“Gold and blue, gold and blue, our banner flying high,  
The colors of our Campus School unfold against the sky.  
Campus School, Campus School, hear our promise true:  
We will always be loyal to our colors gold and blue.

Our spirit too will never fail, but always spur us on,  
From year to year, from grade to grade, ’til high school days will dawn.  
Campus School, Campus School, hear our promise true:  
We will always be loyal to our colors gold and blue.”

-Eau Claire Campus School Song, 1955.
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**Introduction**

For well over a century beginning in the 1830s, most teachers were professionally trained not in liberal arts colleges, or even colleges, but in specialized institutions called “state normal schools”. Here, pupils would be educated almost solely in the art of instruction by specialists who hoped to make America’s school system a more humane and productive experience. The Normal Schools began on the east coast and swept westward. By the 1920s they began to evolve into the “state teacher’s colleges”, most equipped with their own model/campus/training/laboratory school, a department run by the University for the dual purpose of training teachers with real students and developing teaching methods to better fit those student’s needs.

Throughout the 1960s and 70s many of these campus schools closed down due to an inability to support the large number of students who wanted to teach and the amount of money it cost to maintain the building and pay the staff. By the 1980s most of these state teacher’s colleges were now within liberal arts universities and almost all of the model/campus/laboratory schools were either operated by their respective city’s school districts or closed, including the one at the University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire. It almost appears unfair that after such a long time in trying to obtain the campus school, it would only serve the University for barely three decades before being closed and repurposed, and even crueler when the hardships, such as the faulty sound in the observation deck, that ate away half of that time in just making the building functional are taken into consideration.

More than forty years have passed and new techniques for teacher training have made most forget the campus schools ever existed, but their unique way in which they fulfilled the
purpose of training teachers and practicing with pupils with the latest education techniques can never be replaced. By diving into the records of the Campus School in Eau Claire’s vast archives and studying the educational history of these organizations (why they were created, what they accomplished during their life, why they were so suddenly destroyed) this paper hopes to provide a more complete history of Eau Claire’s own facility than has been recorded before and show what the building that so much was put into creating, and later saving, was able to leave behind as its legacy.

The history of the Campus School was almost non-existent after the college became a liberal arts institution and teacher training was no longer the sole focus. Within a generation or two there may no longer be any one outside of the history or education profession who knows of the existence of these buildings. Each of these unique schools deserves to be remembered. In the summer months of 2012 Eau Claire’s Campus School will be demolished to make space for a new building that will house the College of Education. No one will ever again walk its beautiful halls or sit in its tall, spacious classrooms, looking up at the mirrors peering down at them, seeing their reflections, and wondering: what in the world are those mirrors doing up there?

What in the Heck Are Normal Schools?

In order for one to become a doctor, one must go to a medical school to learn the trade. This is also true of lawyers, who must study at a school of law. What of the third profession that usually accompanies these two, the teacher? Have the people who have shaped our view of the world, who have taught us history, science, literature, mathematics, and gym, no school to
call their own? This was not always the case, neither was it the case that the profession suffered so little prestige for the monumental task it undertook. Now most teachers go to regular liberal arts universities where they apply to a teaching program within the institution, but there were schools for teachers; they were called the state normal schools and they began in Massachusetts.

The Bay State has, since its colonial founding, always placed a special emphasis on education. Its earliest law on the books for the promotion of education dated back all the way to 1647; this law was called the “Old Deluder Law” in reference to Satan, “It being one chief object of that old deluder, Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures...” Massachusetts Bay Colony, being a Puritan settlement, would be able to benefit more from this support for scripture.

As America emerged victorious in its revolution and became a country of its own, it had to address education on a national level. In order for a democracy to be successful, its citizens must be well educated. Daniel Webster famously described his feelings on the subject of education in the new nation:

"On the diffusion of education among the people rests the preservation and perpetuation of our free institutions. I apprehend no danger to our country from a foreign foe. Our destruction, should it come at all, will be from another quarter. From the inattention of the people to the concerns of government—from their carelessness and negligence—I must confess that I do apprehend some danger. I fear that they may place too implicit a confidence in their public servants, and fail properly to scrutinize their conduct—that in this way they may be the dupes of designing men. . . . Make them intelligent, and they will be vigilant—give them the means of detecting the wrong, and they will apply the remedy."\(^2\)

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\(^2\) Ibid., 11.
At the time, unfortunately, the most education the average American received, unless they could afford to go to a private university, was from attending a “common school.” According to Charles Harper, a historian of the common schools and normal schools: “They were in session three or four months each year, were very poorly attended, and had to rely on nearly anyone available for a teacher. The system throughout was education for the classes and not for the masses.”

If anyone could become a teacher in the common schools, and the common schools accounted for the extent of most American’s education, then it is easy to see how this system not only did not work but could even spiral out of control if something was not done about it.

In 1825 the Reverend Samuel R. Hall opened his own private academy in Concord, Massachusetts for the purpose of training teachers. It was his hope that they would be able to deliver a better educational experience for the pupils of the common schools. His academy differentiated from those that already existed in two important ways: Hall prepared lectures on “school keeping” for his prospective teachers (these lectures would eventually become the first widely used American textbook for training teachers) and he brought in children to attend a class in which those teachers could practice their vocation. This concept was embraced by Horace Mann, secretary of the newly created Board of Education in Massachusetts. In 1837, with this concept in mind, the board took part in the creation of the State Normals. This training alongside pupils was the beginning of a tradition that has been modified over time, but has never been erased.

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3 Ibid., 12.

4 Ibid., 13.

Hall did not create this school by himself; he was drawing on successes from teacher training schools in Holland, France, and Prussia which sought not only preparation of successful teachers but to challenge the very way in which school lessons were conducted. Harper writes: “Teaching in the Prussian schools was to be no longer a matter of assigning pages of printed material to be memorized, and then of holding the open book while the child repeated the lesson.”6 The success of the reverend’s academy brought support for establishing more of these schools. John Quincy Adams spoke in support: “We see monarchs expending vast sums, establishing normal schools throughout their realms, and sparing no pains to convey knowledge and efficiency to all the children of their poorest subjects. Shall we be outdone by kings?”7

In Massachusetts, where the first laws in the New World on education were passed, where the first American academy for teacher training was created, was in 1839 home of the nation’s very first state-supported school for teachers, located in Lexington. As these schools spread throughout the nation they would not only changed the way teachers were trained and qualified for their profession, but also the very face of education itself, allowing those ambitious enough to apply the scientific method to education through research and experimentation on the best way to teach children. It was also the school’s stated purpose that: “in the aid of all the instruction ... there is to be established a common or district school, as a school of practice in which, under the direction of the principal of the normal school, the young teacher may have the benefit of actual exercise in the business of instruction.”8

7 Ibid, 23.
Normal schools were not complete without their counter-parts, the model schools. The children whom training teachers practiced with needed to be in a natural environment in order for the best results. At Trenton, New Jersey, the normal school established in 1855, led the way in promoting the use of the model schools at a time when it was still common for training teachers to practice on each other instead of children; one can only imagine the experiences lost in such an endeavor.\[^9\]

**The Normal Schools Move West**

In 1853 the first normal school opened in the Midwest in Michigan. This was the fifth normal school in the United States. While back east the state normals had to compete against well-established colleges such as Harvard or Yale for prominence and good prospective students, the Midwest was barely one or two generations out of being the frontier and because of that the Normal Schools had just the right mix of an eager population and more freedom to be able to thrive.\[^10\] In no school is this more apparent than the Laboratory School of the University of Chicago, established in 1892, where John Dewey revolutionized the way teachers teach as well as how teachers are taught.

Dewey drew on the success of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, who opened a school on a farm in Switzerland in 1774 where he taught regular lessons as well as cooking, sewing, and weaving, and was especially kind to the children, Jean-Jacques Rousseau who advocated learning through natural results and consequences of one’s actions, and Friedrich Frobel, who


\[^10\] Ibid., 72.
believed that not only activities but also play was important to a child’s learning and who created the first kindergarten in 1837. In 1896 he opened the Dewey School at the University of Chicago, a laboratory school to serve as a center for evaluation of these and other educational theories, as well as to experiment with his own. He was joined in his endeavors by Colonel Francis Wayland Parker who had an intense sympathy for children and believed strongly that children should learn by doing and not in a desk and seat and that they would naturally learn about things that interested them.11

In Dewey’s school the children were not divided by grades but by interests, intelligence, and ability to do work. Dewey felt that teachers and students should work together and that the teacher was to serve as a counselor, helper, and leader to knowledge and that each experience the student had would serve as a stepping stone into the next one.12 With a view of children that had not previously been present in mainstream educational practice, “Dewey’s theories blended attention to the child as an individual with rights and claims of his own with a recognition of the gulf between an outdated and class-distorted educational setup inherited from the past and the urgent requirements of the new era.”13

The University of Chicago’s Laboratory School is an exemplar in the field, but the accomplishments of one school cannot make a difference unless it affects those that spring up after it. By 1875 there were over seventy normal schools in the United States. By 1900 normal


12 Ibid., 31.

schools became the standard for training teachers (many states looked to the Normal Schools to establish the standards for teacher certification).\(^\text{14}\)

As the schools became the norm for teacher education, entrance requirements became more standardized. High school diplomas were becoming a requirement for admission, with extra classes prescribed to those without one. Of course, that was not required for those who were already teachers; the normals weren’t just for training of new teachers, but also for improving those who had been in the profession. With these new rules came new opportunities as the normals began offering courses in subjects that a future teacher would teach like math and science; while many criticized this diversion from the professional courses, claiming that anyone could teach something they knew already, this practice grew, eventually into the liberal arts that many colleges require today.\(^\text{15}\)

Wisconsin’s normals began with Platteville in 1866. The schools did not receive funding directly from the federal government; they had to rely instead on appropriations from state legislatures. In Wisconsin the land for the State Normal Schools was granted from “Swampland” that was given to the state by a congressional act in 1850 to do with it what the state saw fit. Land that was reclaimed could be given for the construction of a normal school, as was the case with Eau Claire.\(^\text{16}\)

While women were excluded from many universities as well separated from men at the turn of the century, they constituted a majority of the student-body in the state normal schools, where teaching was seen as a viable profession for them. Even when the University of

\(^{14}\) DePencier, *History of the Laboratory Schools*, 97.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 111.

Wisconsin adopted coeducation, women would still be segregated to the backs of classrooms. The classes a majority of women took were considered intellectually inferior, and did not have the opportunity to be taught by a female professor. It was at the normal schools that men and women learned alongside each other from both male and female professors, and were involved in school clubs and societies together. Only in the normal schools were women even offered the opportunity to take classes such as public speaking that were unavailable to them in other institutions.  

**Last of Wisconsin’s Nine: Eau Claire**

Eau Claire was founded very late in terms of other normal schools; it was not completed until after Platteville, La Crosse, Oshkosh, River Falls, Stevens Point, Superior, Whitewater, and even Stout in Menominee, but that certainly wasn’t because they were the last to ask. Eau Claire fought for twenty-five years to receive a Normal School. The fight for their school began in 1891 when the state legislature authorized the Board of Regents of Normal Schools to establish a normal school north of Township 24. Competition with Superior and other townships caused Eau Claire to lose out. Eau Claire was not ready to give up, however, and what did not stop them only made them try harder and in smarter ways. In 1908 Eau Claire sent Emmet Horan to fill a vacancy in the Board of Regents of Normal Schools and in 1909 the state selected Eau Claire for the ninth and final normal school with Harvey Schofield as president.  


The Eau Claire State Normal School was completed in 1916, despite the corner stone being set and dated a year prior.\textsuperscript{19} True to form, when Eau Claire opened the student body of 159 was 141 ladies to 18 men and the faculty consisted of fifteen women and six men. The seating arrangements in the classes allowed for men and women to sit together, which was not done in the universities of the time.\textsuperscript{20} There were initially seven courses of study offered, ranging from one year courses for rural schools to three year courses for high school teachers and principals as well as two years of “college work” that were similar to the general education courses offered today. The high school courses of study required a major chosen from English, history, math, or science. The entering students were either high school graduates, teachers with at least one year of experience under county certification, or those who could pass an entrance exam. The Model school, where teachers could practice their profession on actual children, occupied five classrooms in the normal school and its enrollment through the years of its operation averaged 220 pupils.\textsuperscript{21}

Charles J. Brewer was the first director of the model school as well as teacher training and placement, not to be confused with the actual principal of the model school, whose responsibilities were with the pupils. He was a man who got things done. President Haas spoke fondly of the professionalism that seemed to naturally surround the man: “I can remember when Everett Hirsch, who had become one of the outstanding school superintendents in Wisconsin at Rice Lake moved to Wausau and he had at one time close to a majority of all his teachers from Eau Claire because he was so impressed with first, Charlie Brewer and then the

\textsuperscript{19} This cornerstone was later placed in the University’s Archives.

\textsuperscript{20} Ogren, “Where Coeds were Coeducated,” 8.

\textsuperscript{21} Carter and Jenswold, The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 6.
institution itself." Eau Claire would continue to have excellent leaders in the Campus School until its closure, one of the reasons that despite starting in last, it was able to excel and become known even today as a school for teachers.

**Figure 1.** An overhead view of the Eau Claire State Normal School before 1952.

Source: Carter and Jenswold, *The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.*

Life in the Model School was not very much different for its students than for students in the other schools at the time, at least in Eau Claire where the population was of relative homogony. Probably due to the smaller space of the Model School, two grades shared a room and a teacher together until the fifth grade (first and second together, third and fourth). Pupils

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of the lower grade could listen ahead to the higher level lessons, though there was probably little interest in the higher grade in the room doing the same thing. Of course the pupils were aware that they were being observed, but it was never an intrusive feeling. The student teachers were a regular part of Model School life, as were their lessons, which probably accounted for a quarter of their class time at some points in the year, although these lessons tended to be noticeably shorter. Even the students were aware of the experimentation that often bloomed in the “Laboratory School” environment. After 8th grade the students would continue their education in the city’s public schools, although the bonds the students formed in the Model Schools would stay with them for the rest of their public education.23

The Early Years of the Model School

Very little archival material can be found on the Model School in its early years, although the history of the Normal School is very closely related, from the very beginning Eau Claire tried to be more than just a school for teachers. At the time, the teaching profession was very prestigious, or at least compared to the opportunities most teachers have now; it could have easily been used as a stepping stone into medicine, law, or engineering. The normal school’s choice to give more than just future teachers a chance at education landed it in quite a bit of trouble over the first three decades of its life.24

The first two challenges to the Eau Claire State Normal School arrived in 1923 and 1927 as attempts to abolish it. Perhaps it wasn't as prestigious a career as previously mentioned, if


24 Carter and Jenwsold, The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 12.
only seven years after its creation there was already talk of dismantling such an important institution to the training of competent teachers during a time period of revolution in the field. In fact, the reasoning behind this possible elimination was that it was believed that there might just be a few too many normal schools. The state may have been able to provide land easily to the schools but supporting their continued operation wasn’t as easy. There was some criticism of the “college courses” that were offered to students who did not go on to become teachers. Many bonus veterans from the First World War took advantage of these classes; much like the veterans of World War II would go to college through the GI Bill. Whether they were befitting of future schoolteachers, however, was a different question.\footnote{Ibid., 16.}

In 1923 the school was nearly sold to the city to be run as a regular junior high and in 1927 it was almost sold again, this time to be run as a school for delinquent girls. One can only imagine how different the city of Eau Claire would have turned out had the latter proposal passed. The first two of these four challenges were very straightforward; the next two would be more difficult to overcome. It was not all bad news for the Normal School though, or the State Teacher’s College as it was renamed in 1927. It was now able to offer a four year bachelor’s degree in education.\footnote{Ibid., 20.}

The next event, probably because of the controversy it caused, has just as little secondary information as it does primary, but it needs to be mentioned because embarrassing or not, it was important. In 1934 a student in the Model School was hit by a passing car running from the playground. This issue was a catalyst for local dissatisfaction toward the teacher’s
college. One can only speculate what a motor accident had to do with dissatisfaction toward the college but it took the firing of an economics teacher to placate the citizens.\textsuperscript{27}

The final challenge came to Eau Claire in 1937. Rivalry with the University of Wisconsin almost turned the teacher’s college over to become a two-year extension school, or “Junior College” but was met with local resistance and the plan was dropped. The same community that challenged it four years prior stepped up to ensure its survival. The State Teachers College was not all bad; in fact, it was mostly a good thing for the community. This would be the last major challenge to the State Teacher’s College from the outside. Now it would begin to overcome obstacles to its growth rather than to its existence.\textsuperscript{28}

It was not very long before Eau Claire began to feel the walls closing in. In 1938 Eugene McPhee took over from Brewer to become the director of the Model School. One to get things done, a kindergarten was opened and a school band was organized in the Model School that year; however the 9\textsuperscript{th} and 10\textsuperscript{th} grades of the Model School were relocated to Elk Mound High School due to space constraints. If Eau Claire was going to continue to succeed as a Teacher’s College the Model School would need to occupy its own building. Model School and Campus School could be used interchangeably but it appears as though the Campus School could be considered the evolution of the Model School from being physically inside Schofield Hall to becoming its own building. The fight for this building would take another fourteen years.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 22.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 23.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 32.
By 1939 Oshkosh, La Crosse, River Falls, Stevens Point, and White Water all had their own separate buildings for their Campus Schools. Even Stout had a nursery building. Eau Claire, Platteville, and Superior were the only State Teacher’s Colleges in Wisconsin lacking these facilities.\footnote{Campus School Information. McIntrye Library, Campus School Records, Historical Data. Eau Claire, Wisconsin.} A reagent had previously suggested that Eau Claire receive one, but nothing came of it. In 1940 William R. Davies became president and his assessment titled, “Facts and Figures on Eau Claire State Teacher’s college” showed that while Eau Claire was run at a low cost compared to the University of Wisconsin, there was considerably less floor space per student. He appealed himself to the alumni for the funds to build a Campus School. The request couldn’t have come at a worse time; with the advent of World War II the funds for such an endeavor simply were not there.\footnote{Carter and Jenwsold, \textit{The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire}, 39.}

Obtaining a Campus School was not the only thing Eau Claire attempted to do for its students. Davies’ “Survey of the Training of Secondary Graduates of Teacher’s Colleges” showed that many who attended Eau Claire came from poorer socio-economic backgrounds and while many went on to teach in rural schools in their home communities, that background was the source of criticism by many super-intendants for lacking “culture.” Davies sought to teach this to the students by incorporating it into their learning experience; this was carried out in many of the cultural events that still happen regularly at the University, such as the Forum Series and the many plays and musical performances. They had their beginnings as ways to give
the students of Eau Claire the culture they missed out on from not attending more prestigious colleges or coming from wealthier families.\textsuperscript{32}

In 1945 the Model School experimented with the bussing in of rural students from the surrounding areas to be taught together. All grades were placed in a single room, emulating conditions that the teachers training there would be experiencing in the field. The program only lasted for two years, however, due to extension courses proving to be more effective in training more teachers who were already involved in these rural schools.\textsuperscript{33}

The extension courses were authorized to be offered by the state colleges in 1947. Extension courses were public services offered in neighboring communities, such as Black River Falls, Rice Lake, or Neillsville to name only a few, where College faculty would host a lesson or a workshop for local teachers. Those faculty volunteering were paid only through a fund collected from the people actually taking the course, but it became an expected service of the College for some time. Another wonderful course that was offered was a lesson in visual aids so popular that almost everyone training to become a teacher took it, as well as many who were just getting an education.\textsuperscript{34}

1948 saw major changes for Eau Claire State Teacher’s College. Most importantly, Lester Emans was made director of the training school. A very talented and capable individual, he served on the board for the new Campus School and proved to be a valuable asset in promoting and protecting it for the future. He eventually went on to serve as president of the Wisconsin

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 41.

\textsuperscript{33} Brian Larson interview.

\textsuperscript{34} Carter and Jenwsold, \textit{The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire}, 56.
Association of Student Teaching in 1957 and as a chairman on the Wisconsin Commission of Teacher Education and Professional Standards from 1960 to 1965 where his writings and publications demonstrated an influence in teacher education for years to come.  

1950 was another big year. The State Teacher’s College of Eau Claire received accreditation from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. This organization had been created back in 1869 and had put pressure on the newly developing high schools only to accept teachers granted degrees from the normal schools and teacher’s colleges. Many presidents of teacher’s colleges fought hard to receive this accreditation. It served as a mark of quality for all the College’s efforts.

In 1951 the college began to offer a bachelor’s degree in arts and sciences and was renamed Wisconsin State College – Eau Claire. Unlike the previous name change to State Teacher’s College from State Normal School, this change would have enormous consequences for the role teacher education would play in Eau Claire’s future. It had never been a school exclusively for teachers, even from the start, but now even in name that was apparent. All of these changes were not without advantages, however, and teacher education would remain a strong focus of the College until the present day.

**Eau Claire Builds a Notable Campus School**

The year 1951 marked a turning point for the University’s future, and the following year marked just as important a turning point in the history of the Model School, which was simply

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35 Ibid., 75.  
36 Ibid., 140.  
37 Ibid., 67.
called the Campus School after construction was completed on the new building. While the University itself went on to much success, the Campus School fell into hard times after not even two decades of its existence. There was no way of predicting the future when it was built, but it would eventually prove too much too late, and the larger trends in teacher education would prove too powerful for most campus schools to stay alive, Eau Claire’s included.£38

Eau Claire had been working for a separate building to be used as a Campus School for some time. With the influx of students entering college and taking advantage of the new liberal arts degrees through the GI Bill of Rights, if the campus didn’t start to expand and fast it was going to suffer some terrible growing pains; from 1945 to 1946 the enrollment rate literally doubled. With so many students, it would be easy for the original goals to be lost amongst all the changes if it weren’t for the great expansion that came with it. Not only would a new Campus School building be constructed, but a theatre, gymnasium, and classrooms for the new students. This was the first of a wave of new buildings that would completely transform the campus at Eau Claire.£39

The bid for building the complex was won by L. G. Arnold, Inc. at $998,325 for the new buildings and $193,862 for the heating, plumbing, and ventilation, bringing the total to approximately $1.2 million, the lowest of the four bids. Wisconsin Governor Oscar A. Rennebohm turned the first pile of earth at the groundbreaking ceremony of the new Campus School building on October 13th, 1950. President Davies performed the laying of the cornerstone. Among the items placed inside of the corner stone was the Wisconsin Bluebook,


£38 Ibid., 65.

£39 Ibid., 66.
the 1950-51 college handbook, pictures of the stage-set from several College Theatre productions, pictures of President Schofield and the original 149 students, and the history of the college written by Emmet Horan. The building was dedicated on October 8th, 1952. Eau Claire finally had its own Campus School building.\textsuperscript{40}

**Figure 2.** A conceptual drawing of the campus school complex.

![A conceptual drawing of the campus school complex.](image)

Source: Carter and Jenwsold, *The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire*.

Lester Emans himself wrote detailed descriptions of the new building for various educational journals and went into great detail to describe the important aspects of the new building. The classrooms of the new Campus School contained large clerestory windows to

\textsuperscript{40} Campus School Records, “Our Dream”, *Daily Telegram* clippings 1950-52. Eau Claire, Wisconsin.
allow as much natural light through as possible and the walls were artistically decorated with pastel colors. There was a room for a four-year and five-year old kindergarten and a room for every regular grade up through eight. Each of these rooms contained a project room and a teacher’s office where student teachers could conference with their supervisors. The teacher’s office contained the same one way viewing glass as the observation deck. The campus school also contained a workshop for speech and drama called the “Little Theatre” which came with a small stage, dressing and make-up rooms, a special studio for broadcasting, a wardrobe, and a shop. The largest part of the campus school was the gymnasium completed with a nurse’s office and exercise room. The field house had enough space for two basketball courts when the bleachers were folded in. The curriculum library also contained a children’s library under the supervision of a librarian.\(^{41}\)

The new campus school contained a special “materials and methods” laboratory and curriculum library. Separated into elementary and secondary, the two rooms, as Lester Emans described:

“Housed textbooks, workbooks, manuals, guides, bulletins, and other materials similar to those used in elementary and secondary schools of the area. Filing cases, both letter and legal size provide an organized place for clippings, leaflets, and small bulletins not suitable for open shelves. Chart bins and storage cases below work height counters enable tag board, Bristol board, mimeograph, and hectograph paper and other such supplies to be readily available for use by teachers in training.”\(^{42}\)

There were rooms with typewriters, duplicators, and a file room for educational tests and counter workspace. The building housed the Department of Education as well as the

\(^{41}\) Lester Emans, “A Notable Professional Laboratory School,” The School Board Journal, October 1952. Lester Emans Papers, Box 2/Folder 1. Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

\(^{42}\) Lester Emans “Laboratory Schoolhouse for the Preservice Education of Teachers” The Nation’s Schools vol 51. No 6, 1952, Lester Emans Papers, Box 2/Folder 1. Eau Claire, Wisconsin.
Department of Psychology. One of the most important features of the new campus school was the “observation gallery.” It was a corridor located above the main rooms of the campus school that was lined with one-way viewing mirror and contained sound equipment that would allow the conversations in the classrooms to be heard from above. It was the hope of the university that this would allow observers to see and hear students in more natural situations as they would be unaware that they were being observed. Only a small signal light in the teacher’s office would alert that a group was present and listening in. This would prove to be a significant change from the visible presence of student observers in the old building.43

Also written in 1952 by Lester Emans, almost appropriately written given the timing of Eau Claire’s new Campus School, was a piece titled, “Where We Are Going in Teacher Education.” According to Emans, teacher’s colleges were setting up more and more rigorous standards for admission into their programs. A general education of many subjects was quickly becoming a prerequisite, as well as a psychological understanding of the way students learn. Many schools were giving their students laboratory experience before their student teaching as student teaching itself was reworked so that a student would slowly gain more responsibility until they took over a class; this process was now being recognized as a necessity. By this time most schools required a minimum of four years of study. Teacher colleges were also developing follow-up programs to track their graduates’ progress in their careers. Finally, teacher’s colleges became more involved with each other through professional organizations that helped them exchange ideas and practices.44

43 “Laboratory Schoolhouse for the Preservice Education of Teachers.”
The new building did a lot of good for the college, but there were one or two very large problems with the new Campus School. First, the building had gone over budget and the basement was not completed, the floors were nothing more than sand, and would stay that way until a remodeling project toward the end of the Campus School’s service to the University. The second, and more pressing issue was that the sound system installed in the observation decks did not work, meaning that they were essentially useless to any large group of students trying to observe the classrooms below. Western Sound & Electric was to give an evaluation of the faulty sound system in the observation deck in 1957 but no progress was made. Again in 1958 Continental Engineering failed to bring forth a recommendation for fixing the sound system. In 1960 a representative from Hi-Fi Corner was invited to Eau Claire, all expenses paid, for professional counsel about the sound system: another failure. The Chief Engineer for the State of Wisconsin was brought in to make recommendations on the sound system in 1965. In the summer of 1966 the appropriate parts were ordered and Richard Beckman was able to supervise the installation. It took fourteen years, just as long as the battle to obtain the Campus School, but the observation deck finally had sound. Prior to the new sound system, the observation deck was hosting about 100 observers per week and able to accommodate ten times that amount. Now that the observation decks were being used, headsets were requested (between 60 and 75) to accommodate the larger student groups.45

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44 “Where are We Going in Teacher Education” 1952, Lester Emans Papers, Box 2/Folder 1, Campus School Records. Eau Claire, WI.

Unfortunately, in this fourteen year struggle the observation deck had been cluttered by items from the speech department that made navigation difficult, and was rarely cleaned, for instance gum stuck to a window that had been untouched for over a year. The observation deck’s storage contained items as big as furniture and file cabinets for the theatre; because of its disuse signs like “No Smoking” and “Do Not Touch the Windows” had to be put up: “Our students, the ones upstairs, were tapping on the windows and the children downstairs would see them. They would be sitting there with their foreheads against the glass so the children in the classroom would throw wet paper wads up and they would stick on the glass.”

The only heat source on the observation deck, a single uninvent in the south end, was not only inadequate to heat the north end of the deck, but was blocked by stage props from the department of speech and thus ineffective. After the sound was fixed the speech department unblocked the vent, but continued to use the upper deck space for storage. Anyone able to observe the observation deck will notice that to this day the upper levels have been used as storage, and even going up anymore is allowed only to people who have business with what is stored there.

Once the observation deck had sound, the Campus School sought to create an electronics learning laboratory for experimentation in teaching of foreign language. Koss Sound Corporation installed the language laboratory in 1969 but there were several problems with the equipment. Screws not being mounted correctly, amplifiers and tape recorders being uncovered, and it was thought dangerous for the children to use until the repairs were

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46 Mary Rowe, interview by Ben Thompson, tape recording, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, April 1986, Campus School Records.

eventually made the following month. This project’s goal was to take advantage of new technology in teaching foreign languages to children; it was one of the many experiments that would be undertaken in the lab school throughout its existence.\textsuperscript{48}

**The Age of Experimentation & Justification**

One aspect of the Campus School that deserves considerable examination is the interesting research projects that were conducted in its later years. It perhaps did so in its earlier years, too, but very few primary documents contain information like that. In June and July of 1967 Eau Claire and other laboratory schools met together at the Wingspread Conference Center in order to create a rationale for the continued presence of lab schools in the universities for the Coordinating Committee for Higher Education which was evaluating just that. The Campus School had to prepare a brief statement on its purpose:

“1) A center for demonstrating the pragmatic value of theory to thousands of students and teachers who utilize it yearly and as a center providing participation opportunities under controlled conditions for many of these thousands; 2) A ‘lighthouse’ or ‘model’ school where superior teaching at all grade levels portrays the best that can be selected from research and innovation throughout the nation and where the widest dissemination of these ideas can take place; and 3) A testing ground for new ideas in education where pilot studies can be conducted and where research can be initiated, replicated, or disseminated.”\textsuperscript{49}

The decade of the sixties was the most active in terms of the third goal, a testing ground for new ideas, perhaps in response to the increasing pressures on the campus school to do more to justify its expense to the University and to the State. This was so important to the Campus

\textsuperscript{48} Letter to Richard Hibbard from Lester Emans; Letter to E.J. Baireuther from Peter Shatrawka; Campus School Records, Observation Deck Folder, 1968-69.

\textsuperscript{49} “Campus Laboratory Schools”, July 1967. Campus School Records. Eau Claire, Wisconsin.
School that it changed its name to the Campus Experimental Laboratory School in 1968. The Department of Elementary Education followed, changing its name to the Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education as its junior high students were phased out.\textsuperscript{50}

The junior high portion of the Campus School was phased out in 1966 after only six years of its existence. It was organized in 1959 after the city changed from an 8-4 school system to a 6-3-3.\textsuperscript{51} This was due to the junior high being restricted to only twenty-five pupils per grade for a total of seventy-five students. It was the opinion of President Haas and Dr. Emans that this number would not be enough to provide the kinds of club activities that these students would have had access to in a normal junior high school. The super-intendant of schools Homer Delong assured that the students would be successfully relocated to other schools without any problems.\textsuperscript{52}

The University experimented with microteaching, wherein a lesson was taught in a smaller time frame. This was for the benefit of the student teachers. The length of the lesson was not important for them to learn when they could view themselves through the lens of a television camera. The lessons were video-taped and the students could re-watch themselves afterwards. It was very effective in building up confidence and helping the student teachers identify their mistakes, despite the anxiety of teaching one’s first lessons on camera to be recorded and played back.\textsuperscript{53}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[52] McIntyre Library, University History Research Files. Eau Claire, Wisconsin.
\end{footnotes}
From 1962-1964 an experiment was conducted in the 3rd grade of the Campus School in which Spanish was taught by using the language to teach other lessons; between a quarter and a half of all instruction was in Spanish. The class was planned by Ruth Thompson at the University and taught by Maria del Rosario Lavin de los Santos, a teacher from the Ministry of Education in Mexico. The project found that the children were far advanced in their knowledge of Spanish, although their vocabulary was more centered on their surrounding environment as opposed to the students learning Spanish in a normal fashion who learned more words from stories. Most importantly, it did not show students decreasing in their other test scores. Unfortunately for all who struggle in math, this experiment did not seem catch on.54

In 1966 the laboratory school conducted an experiment with an eighth grade math class in which everyone was given the grade of “p” for pass at the beginning of the semester and told that the grade was permanent. It would not change for any reason. It was speculated as to whether the removal of the incentive provided by a grade would affect the student’s motivation to learn and master the material. Other than not grading, the rest of the class was taught regularly, testing included. There was no documented change in the students’ performance.55

It was agreed, in 1968, to create a demonstration classroom for purposes of special education, accommodated by a remodeling of the Children’s Library which would be moved into the lower level of the building. It is unfortunate that it was referred to, privately by a few


involved with it as the “Mentally Retarded Room” or even just as the “Retarded Room” but was just a sign of the times. There were several reasons for the establishment of this classroom. A demonstration class was needed for students majoring in special education and psychology (special education was called mental retardation at the time) and could also prove beneficial for observation by nursing and social work majors. The class could also be used to demonstrate innovations in special education such as speech correction and new instructional materials for special education. Rooms 105 and 107 in the Campus School were remodeled in 1969 for this purpose.  

In 1969 the University launched its “Inter-Cultural Education Program” after hosting a conference on “Teaching the Culture of Minority Groups in our Schools.” It was working with Headstart, a nationwide program of pre-schools, by hosting summer sessions to work with children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Many of the surrounding school systems had these summer programs but they did not include multi-racial group experience. Eau Claire’s did: “Black children, Indian children, Mexican-American children and white children working together in the Laboratory School at State University in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, for a summer? ‘Never! Impossible! You’re dreaming!’ some people might have said. But it was a reality in the 1969 Summer Session. How did it come about?” One hundred sixty children were enrolled in the 1969 session. Forty-nine were black. Seven students were Mexican-American. These students were from Racine. Thirty-eight students were Winnebago Indians from Black River Falls. The remaining seventy-two were whites from the rural communities in the area.

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Some of the children from Racine were given host families in the area to live with throughout the duration. The students from Black River Falls were bussed in and out, over a hundred miles each day. The program was focused on providing these students with better skills in speaking, listening, writing and reading but each classroom created a lesson plan according to its student’s needs. Sociometric tests were given twice during the session to measure the student’s relationships with each other. It was hoped that a by-product of the program would be further acceptance between the races.\textsuperscript{57}

**The Lab Schools Closing and the Future of Teacher Education**

Despite the hard-work of all the staff: “campus school teachers had many different roles, first and foremost a teacher for the campus school pupils, then a professor of methods for the college students, a mentor for the student teachers ... they had a responsibility to do research, and public service where they would host lessons and workshops in neighboring communities,” the Campus Lab Schools could not avoid having to fight just as hard for their right to exist and they did to train future teachers and educate their students.\textsuperscript{58}

In 1969 the deans of the former state teacher’s colleges now state universities as of 1964, which also marked the beginning of the College of Education at the University were all asked for a reaction to the possibly phasing out of their Campus Schools.\textsuperscript{59} Eau Claire’s response was a strongly opposed stand. The exact wording was that they “deplored” the thought. Even

\textsuperscript{57} Campus School Records, Inter-Cultural Education Program Handbook, 1969 Summer Session, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

\textsuperscript{58} Paul Nagel, interview by Ben Thompson, tape recording, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, April 1986, Campus School Records. Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

\textsuperscript{59} Carter and Jenwsold, *The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire*, 85.
though the laboratory school no longer served as the setting for a majority of student teachers, it still stood as a place for innovation, experimentation and research amongst the students and faculty. The departments of psychology and sociology as well as the school of nursing each used the lab school for their own observations to great benefit of the university students and in fact only eight of the rooms in the lab school were used by the children now. It was further stated that discontinuing the lab school would provide no savings to the university’s operation costs, and because the superintendent of schools in Eau Claire would not commit to providing a similar setting, the lab school was the only place in the area that such research could be done.  

There were many different people (boards of trustees, university presidents, deans of education, and the schools’ own faculty) who helped close the many laboratory schools in the U.S. during the 1960s and 1970s. Reasons were varied but some stuck out: funding the schools, the lack of distinctive curriculum, the need for racial equity, and the changing role of education schools. Closing of the direct-service and increasing focus on research was a campaign by many schools of education to gain respect from the other departments on campus that never really worked out. “Between 1970 and 1976, the number of operating schools in the National Association of Laboratory Schools dropped from 197 to 166, then dropped to 123 in 1981. The most cited reason for this wave of shutdowns is fiscal.”

In 1971 the University of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin State Universities merged together, becoming simply the University of Wisconsin. In 1973 the Campus School was phased out.

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61 Russell B. Olwell, “The Closing of the Laboratory Schools and the Changing Role of University Schools of Education,” American Educational History Journal 33, no. 2 (Fall 2006).
out and became a regular K-6 elementary school for Eau Claire.\textsuperscript{62} This set-up was to be in place for thirty years, but according to a release stored in the archives of the UW-Eau Claire News Bureau, in 1998 the School District of Eau Claire terminated leasing of the University’s Campus School building, three years before the lease was set to expire in 2001. The University used the first floor of the Campus School for a children’s center as well as for overflow classes. The second floor was used for storage of surplus goods.

\textbf{Figure 3.} A conceptual drawing of the new education complex.

![Conceptual Drawing of New Education Complex](https://example.com/image.jpg)

Source: The University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire Website.

In 2011 the State of Wisconsin Building Commission approved the $44.5 million education building to be completed in the fall of 2013:

“The approximately 170,000-square-foot building will replace the obsolete Brewer Hall/Campus School complex. It will be located between Schneider Hall and Zorn Arena.

\textsuperscript{62} Carter and Jenwsold, \textit{The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire}, 85.
Campus School will be razed to make way for the new building. The current project timeline calls for construction to begin in spring 2012 with completion in late fall 2013. Funding for the project was included in the 2011-13 state budget.”

The building will house the College of Education, the Services for Students with Disabilities, the Student Success Center, and the Office of Multicultural Affairs. This is the first new building on campus to be funded entirely by state tax dollars in thirty years.

On October 21st, 2011 The Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict announced the sale of St. Bede Monastery to University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Foundation. The monastery will be used first and foremost as the new Children’s Center when the Campus School is razed in the following year after extensive renovations, hoped to be completed in time. The University had planned on constructing a new Children’s Center alongside the new education building but bids for the project exceeded the 3.8 million dollars budget and St. Bede Monastery proved a good alternative.

**Conclusion**

In a few years the University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire will complete its new education building and enter into a new phase of teacher education. Ultimately Eau Claire was a slave to the circumstances of the time. Perhaps with more money and more space the Campus School

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could have continued its existence and service to the University well past its short life-span, but
had that been true at a University like Eau Claire it would have sung true at so many others and
the history of these buildings would be much longer, and hopefully full of even more
accomplishments.

By no means, however, did the school at Eau Claire deserve not to have its story told. From a few rooms in a small building with the hope to train teachers that would go out in the world and make a difference, to a laboratory for experimentation with the latest technology and theoretical education techniques; struggling to keep its identity as a school for the education of teachers, to fighting to maintain its most prominent features like the observation deck, the Model / Campus School at Eau Claire has accomplished much in the face of adversity and even though it was ultimately discontinued, it was not through any fault of its own but rather because of the times it was in.

Eau Claire is not the only place where an ordinary Campus School met with extraordinary circumstances, either. Future work could shed light on the other important Midwestern normal schools, the struggles they faced, the techniques they created, and their own schools reactions to their closing, as well as if there were any Campus Schools that held out against the phasing out trend into later decades.
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