

Oakcliff School History

Oakcliff Elementary School opened its doors on the morning of August 31, 1964, with 541 pupils present in grades 1 through 7. Located in the Oakcliff community, Oakcliff originally received its entire student body from Cary Reynolds School. Seventeen classrooms housed the student body and Mr. J. Bernard MacArthur supervised 22 staff members. PTA by laws and the election of officers was in place by September of that year. By 1966, a 13 room expansion to Oakcliff was completed.

Mr. Marvin Fralish became principal in 1970 and Oakcliff experienced active community involvement with many effective results. Two special education classes were introduced. Emphasis was placed on extra-curricular activities. By 1973, the building had grown to 39 classrooms and a staff of 61, with an enrollment of 968 students. A kindergarten class was added in 1975. Oakcliff was beginning to make a change toward a multi-cultural student body by the 1976. An ESOL teacher was added in 1978 due to the influx of international students. During the same period, a continuous progress approach to learning was taking place. Discovery classes and Mini-courses for 5th, 6th, and 7th graders' enrichment was added. In 1978, Ms. Kay Stringer, former faculty member, was appointed Oakcliff's first Instructional Lead Teacher.

Mr. Harold Wells became Oakcliff's 3rd principal in 1979. A middle school approach to course offerings was available to 6th and 7th graders who were given the by being given the option of choosing electives for enrichment. In 1980, the addition of three Early Childhood Special Education classes made Oakcliff several schools under one roof. In addition to being a regular K - 7 elementary school, it was also a school for Early Childhood, a Middle Years School and a school for students with special problems. By 1985, Oakcliff entered the computer age with two computers.

In 1986, Mr. Marion Miller was the new principal and Ms. Margaret Haller the new lead teacher. Dillard Paper Company adopted Oakcliff. A very important new aspect of the school was the Remedial Education Program to improve comprehensive reading and study skills. The position of Lead Teacher for Student Services was added in 1987 as was the Writing to Read computer lab. Oakcliff faculty members began working on a Strategic Plan for School Improvement during the 1989 - 90 school year. The enrollment was somewhat smaller that year due to the 7th grade moving to Sequoyah Junior High School. K-Mart became the second adopter for Oakcliff in 1991.

Dr. Steve Pemberton assumed duties as principal during the 1993-94 school year. Joint efforts between the school and the community begun that year included the renovation of the courtyard into a formal garden suitable for outdoor classes. In addition, thematic murals were painted throughout the building, depicting areas of educational endeavor. Oakcliff housed classes from overcrowded Dresden Elementary School for two years. In 1996- 97, Oakcliff was approved to become a traditional theme school. Two new adopters were acquired: Texaco/Star Enterprises and Publix Store #477. The year ended with 70 staff members and 650 students. In 1997, faculty members at Oakcliff wrote a proposal for Oakcliff to be considered as DeKalb County's School of Excellence. Oakcliff was chosen for that honor, and was also named a Title 1 Distinguished School.