

A BRIEF HISTORY ON BAKER SCHOOL 5J

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DECISIONS LEADING TO TODAY

- Economy in Baker City was very different early to mid-80's
 - Support from timber industry
 - BSD5J student enrollment 2,500
- Economy at the local and State level changed late 80's
 - Loss of timber industry in Baker City caused
 - Decrease in tax revenue support
 - Initial decline in student enrollment
 - Increase of State mandates
 - Decrease of State funding

CHURCHILL SCHOOL'S STORY

- Between 1987-88 ODE mandated half day kindergarten
- During this time there were four community elementary schools serving grades 1-6
 - North Baker
 - South Baker
 - Brooklyn and
 - Churchill



CHURCHILL SCHOOL'S STORY

- Each facility served approximately 400 students (slightly less at Churchill)
- It was felt that the 4 schools could not support the additional kindergarten classroom space needs and maintain a K-6 program
- Discussions lead toward making three large K-5 program facilities and transition Churchill to a grade 6 only school

CHURCHILL SCHOOL'S STORY

- Churchill operated as a grade 6 school until 2002
- In order to balance the budget the District determined to close the facility and relocate some of the personnel
- The facility stood idle until 2007 when it was sold to a local couple who had aspirations of converting the space into high scale rental units
- It stands idle today

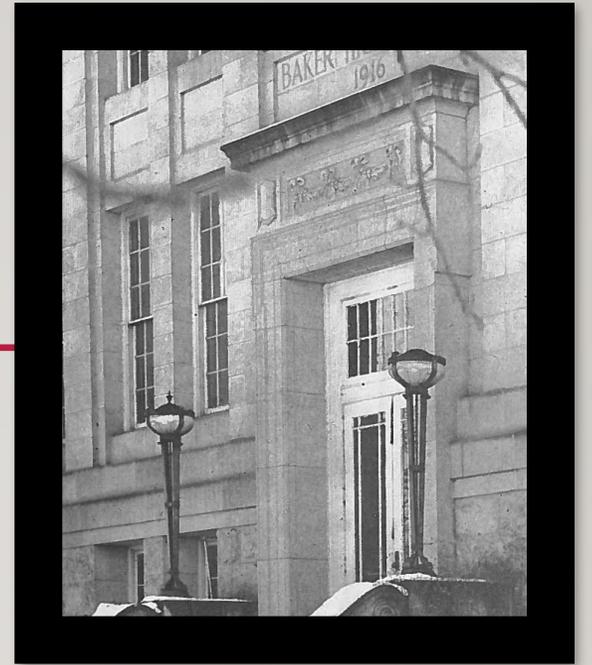
CENTRAL'S STORY

- The Central building was the original high school in Baker, with spacious classrooms, a large auditorium, gym and cafeteria all located in one building.
- The school population at that time as noted by the graduating classes were indeed quite small.
- The Central building has much sentimental value as descendants of those who attended the school still reside in Baker Valley.



CENTRAL'S STORY

- In 1986 the 3rd floor of the Central building was closed, some of which was due to declining enrollment
- It was considered to re-open the space in later years but did not meet current building code standards:
 - Asbestos abatement
 - Disability access (elevator)
 - Fire suppression / Sprinkler system
- The associated costs with updates were not within the District budget



CENTRAL'S STORY

- In 2007, the second floor was closed and the classrooms were moved to the Helen Stack building.
- In 2007, the building was put up for sale while it was still a learning environment.
- In 2009, after being declared unsafe, Central was closed for good. At that time, only the bottom floor was in use. This provided a woodshop, art room, and the cafeteria.
- A strategic point in the bond campaign was that the Central building was unsafe. While this assertion was made in 2006-07, it did not completely close until three years later.



CENTRAL'S STORY

- All remaining Central programs were moved into the Helen Stack building (aka Baker Middle School)
- This greatly impacted the staff and students in the following ways
 - School lunch program
 - Physical education / athletic space
 - Loss of electives
- This building stands idle today, a testament to the beauty and integrity of tuft rock architecture, but slowly deteriorating due to inactivity

NORTH BAKER'S STORY

- 2009 was very difficult on school funding State-wide and greatly impacted rural communities like BSD5J
- Many school district simply could not afford to maintain programs
- As a result of this, BSD5J RIFed approx. 15-20 teaching, para-pro and administrative positions



NORTH BAKER'S STORY

- It was also determined that North Baker would be closed as it had the most significant needs out of the functioning facilities
- Additionally it was a three-story structure that limited K-1 use from upper
- There were also the following issues:
 - Asbestos abatement
 - Disability access (elevator)
 - Fire suppression / Sprinkler system

NORTH BAKER'S STORY



- As a result:
 - Kindergarten was moved to the vocational wing at Baker High School
 - Brooklyn Elementary grades K-5, became Brooklyn Primary grades 1-3
 - South Baker Elementary grade K-5, became South Baker Intermediate grade 4-6
- The kindergarten stayed at BHS until 2014 when it was moved to Brooklyn to make room for Baker Technical Institute
- The kindergarten move to Brooklyn necessitated the need to add modular classrooms to the facility to accommodate the additional students

NORTH BAKER'S STORY

- North Baker never completely shut as planned
 - The Baker Web Academy formed in 2010 was granted a lease
 - Union Baker ESD Alternative program was located in the facility and renamed Eagle Cap
 - This program was located in Haines previously
 - The facility currently also houses:
 - Marla's Mall
 - Bulldog Bubbles
 - BHS culinary arts program



IN CLOSING

- In this brief snapshot of recent history, Baker School District has been forced to make the unenviable decision to close three of its schools. Central, Churchill, and North Baker Elementary have all fallen victim to declining enrollment, inconsistent state funding, and the impracticality and cost of trying to remodel old buildings to current standards. Your committee has done a very thorough job of trying to put all the pieces together to create an objective picture of what currently exists in 5J. Thank you for this commitment and good luck as you move forward with your work.