

Reviewing Ross High School's namesake

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The recent news that site work had begun for the new Ross High School calls for a look back at the man for whom the high school was named.

Professor W. W. Ross, having already displayed his outstanding educational and leadership talents at a variety of schools, came to Fremont as superintendent of schools in 1864 and spent 42 years leading the local school system.

His tenure here was such that Basil Meek's "History of Sandusky County" has this to say, "His intellectual force was so great and his personal magnetism so potent, that no city in the country could point to any such educational progress in the same length of time."

Early in his service the local school's first course of study covering a period of 11 or 12 years was developed with four years being set for a high school program. Programs such as algebra, geometry, trigonometry, physiology, geography, philosophy, history, bookkeeping, botany, chemistry, rhetoric, government, natural history, astronomy, logic, philosophy and Latin were included in the plan.

Within two years of Ross taking over as superintendent, a building program was put into motion at least partially in response to the fact that two of the existing "schools" were actually located in rented space "entirely unsuited to school purposes."

The two new school buildings, one on each side of the river, greeted students early in 1868 and the building program continued over several years, including a structure specifically designated as a high school in 1891.

Progress was made in the development of a management organization; new courses were added; and changes were made in the basis for promotion from one grade to the next.

The duties of the superintendent were better defined as the district grew. Ross had spent the bulk of his time teaching in his early days as superintendent and had handled supervision through teacher meetings and brief periods set aside for supervision. Other organizational steps included the creation of the offices of principal of the high school and superintendent of buildings, the latter being also the truant officer.

Among other significant developments was the establishment of a kindergarten program for the local schools.

Meek has this to say about Professor Ross: "He was a ready writer, a forceful speaker, a convincing debater and a deep thinker."

He was active in numerous educational/ teacher organization and the recipient of many honors through his efforts.

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