



History and Retrospective of Northern High School

Northern High School was constructed in Owings, Maryland on a plot of land which, at the time, was surrounded by tobacco fields. Enrollment was increasing in Calvert County, and the new school opened its doors in the middle of the 1973-1974 school year. Students from Calvert High School, the only high school in the county at the time, transferred to Northern midyear.

Built as an open space school with pods and no interior walls, the original building housed both the high school and the middle school, each in one half of the building with a shared cafeteria in the middle. After a few years, "temporary" metal walls divided the building into classrooms around central hallways. The original building lacked natural sunlight, which clearly has been remedied in the design of our new campus.

Northern Middle School opened next door in 1976, and the old building finally became the Northern High School most of us remember. The neighboring Mary D. Harrison Cultural Arts Center opened as part of the campus in 1985, allowing Northern's music, theatre, and art programs to expand and flourish. Despite a building that left much to be desired, over the years NHS became a notably high achieving school in a county that itself became a leader in education in the state.

Starting in the early eighties, Northern's tradition of winning regional and state titles in sport after sport was established. For four years in the nineties, when Rockfish were endangered, Northern's science department raised and released over a half million fish into the Bay in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources. In the 2000's, the Future Business Leaders of America began an ongoing tradition of sweeping the awards at their state and national competitions. And in the 2010's, Northern students and staff introduced younger children to STEM education at the annual Science and Technology Expo. That's only a tiny fraction of the things that were accomplished in the old NHS.

CCPS worked for over a decade to plan and fund a replacement for the Northern building. On July 26, 2016, the Calvert County Board of Education awarded a contract to J.A. Scheibel Construction, Inc., of Huntingtown, Maryland, for the total replacement of Northern High School on the same campus as the existing school, as well as renovations to the Mary D. Harrison Cultural Arts Center. Construction was completed in phases. The main instructional building opened to students in January 2019; the administrative wing was completed during the 2019-2020 school year; and renovations to the Mary D. Harrison Cultural Arts Center were finished in 2020.

Northern High School and its students are ever changing; nonetheless, the primary mission to educate all students remains constant. In this innovative building, the staff will carry on our 48-year tradition of excellence in education and service to students and our community. The Northern High School community is excited and appreciative to have this new facility. As always, **Proud to be a Patriot!**