

# Prior Lake High School



**Square Footage:** 355,000  
**Project Cost:** \$52 million  
**Architect:** Wold Architects  
and Engineers  
**Schedule:** October 2001 to  
September 2003



“Bossardt Corporation committed to completing our new high school on time and under budget. Their commitment was met, even given uncontrollable roadblocks such as record-breaking rainfall, bankruptcy of the electrical contractor and a roofers’ strike. Bossardt Corporation can take pride in the school’s successful completion for the 2003-2004 school year.”

Tom Westerhaus  
Superintendent  
Prior Lake-Savage  
Area Schools  
Independent School  
District 719



## Prior Lake High School

A lot can change in 50 years. Take, for instance, Prior Lake, Minnesota, and the surrounding communities. In the 1950s, they were still farmlands on the cusp of growth. Today they are burgeoning suburbs with a growing number of children and teenagers.

As a result, Independent School District 719 has doubled its enrollment in the past 10 years and in 2007 served more than 6,600 students. With a 5 percent annual growth rate (that's adding half the population of one elementary school every year), building space has become a premium.

In May 2000, voters acknowledged the dilemma and approved a \$67.8 million construction program that included construction of a

new Prior Lake High School. Bossardt Corporation was hired as construction manager for the entire program in fall 2000, and work commenced at once.

"Everyone knew the timeline was tight – and critical," says Dan Mehleis, director of operations for Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools. "The high school absolutely had to open its doors Sept. 2, 2003, as the old school was simultaneously being renovated into an elementary school. There was no place for 1,600 students to go if the building wasn't ready on time."

The schedule was challenged from the start by poor soil conditions and heavy rain. Bossardt Corporation implemented recovery schedules and moved its entire project team and additional staff to the on-site office to speed decision-making and contractor coordination. The move helped the company handle a subsequent strike and contractor bankruptcy. "I hadn't worked with a construction manager before," says Superintendent Tom Westerhaus. "I thought it might be difficult to pin down

who's responsible when things go wrong. But I found that Bossardt Corporation took responsibility and addressed any issue that came up. For that I'm grateful."

The new school was built to accommodate 2,000 students and a future classroom addition. It features two top-loading gymnasiums, a 650-seat auditorium, large lecture room, three academic wings, a media center and more. It even has a backup generator to reduce the school's energy use. Prior Lake High School is a reflection of the school district's commitment to "building tomorrow today."

