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Duluth--- The UMD Laboratory School will be closed in June, 1967, Provost Raymond W. Darland announced today.

Parents of the 174 kindergarten through sixth grade students in the Laboratory School received letters today officially notifying them of the decision.

"This decision has been reached with deep concern for the loss of a school which has played such an important role in the history of the Duluth campus," Provost Darland declared. "However, the funds have not been made available to provide the kind of a laboratory school which can fulfill the purposes of the University in teacher education, curriculum development and educational research.

"It is with great regret that we find it necessary to close the UMD Laboratory School at the end of the 1966-67 academic year."

The original Laboratory School was started in the days of the Duluth Normal School in the early 1900s under President Eugene Bohannon. The present Laboratory School building on E. Fifth St. was completed in 1926. In 1962, the seventh and eighth grades of the School were discontinued.

Provost Darland noted that a substantial addition to the Chester Park Elementary School, which is adjacent to the UMD campus, is expected to be ready for use in the fall of 1967. "The addition will alleviate crowding which presently exists in the University area and will serve the children now attending the Laboratory School," he said.

Dr. Valworth R. Plumb, chairman of the UMD Division of Education and Psychology under which the Laboratory School operates, noted that the School "has performed well its traditional mission of providing a setting for student teaching experiences by prospective teachers.

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"But the mission of such a school is changing. Such a school should now be capable of serving as a center for experimentation, innovation and demonstration," Dr. Plumb explained.

Dr. Plumb recalled that the 1963 Minnesota Legislature did not provide the funds requested for a new Laboratory School on the UMD campus which would have allowed development of a school in keeping with present-day needs. Plumb added that because of the University's needs for new construction and new staff to meet rising enrollments and state needs in the areas of research and professional education, "there seems little possibility that a new campus Laboratory School could be constructed in the foreseeable future. We have sought funds from other sources as well, and again our efforts have been fruitless."

Plumb said closing the School will "free certain financial resources which will make it possible for us to strengthen our program of teacher preparation in other promising directions."

Plumb and Provost Darland said that they are assured of working relationships with the Duluth Public Schools which will absorb the student teaching experience for all student teachers now served by the School. Only about 10% of UMD's student teachers majoring in elementary education have been gaining student teaching experience in the Laboratory School.

Darland and Plumb expressed confidence that exciting possibilities now exist for cooperation between UMD and the public schools of Duluth and the neighboring area in developing new patterns of teacher preparation, and in developing joint ventures in educational development and demonstration.

Provost Darland said Laboratory School faculty members who have earned tenure will be guaranteed suitable employment and that those without tenure will be given every opportunity to stay with the University if they wish.

No decision has been made as to what use will be made of the Laboratory School building after June, 1967.