

# Sealth

Name:	<b>Chief Sealth High School</b>	Enrollment:	957
Address:	2600 SW Thistle Street	Nickname:	Seahawks
Configuration:	9-12	Colors:	Blue and gray
Newspaper:	<i>Southwester</i>	Annual:	<i>Cache</i>



Sealth, 1963 SPSA 018-1

In June 1954, the growing population in southwest Seattle led the Seattle School District to plan for its first new high school in some 30 years. Enrollment estimates indicated that the high school population in West Seattle would reach 4,000 by 1965. The school board selected a site in the Westwood neighborhood near White Center, across the street from Denny Junior High School.

The school was named for Noah Sealth, the most prominent American Indian leader in the region at the time of the city's settlement. Chief Sealth was regarded as an influential friend by the founding fathers who named their town after him. The name of the school represents a closer English pronunciation of the Suquamish leader's actual name than does the spelling of the city's name, Seattle.



Sealth, 1958 SPSA 018-8

The construction of the new school was unique for the region, although it had been used extensively in other countries. It was selected because of its ability to withstand earthquakes. Known as a "thin-shell" type of building, the structure is all concrete with three-inch walls. The

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Name: **Chief Sealth High School**  
Location: 2600 SW Thistle Street  
Building: 50-room concrete  
Architect: Naramore, Bain, Brady  
& Johnson  
Site: 17.45 acres

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1957: Named on May 3; opened  
in September  
1969: Addition (Naramore, Bain,  
Brady & Johnson)

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roof has a concrete base with a built-up roofing finish. A large “barrel” roof covers the gymnasium and auditorium, which seat 2,000 and 1,150 respectively. Built on the grounds, the roof was eased into place in a mere four hours by a team of 26 men. At the time, it was the largest roof in the Pacific Northwest.

Chief Sealth High School opened with 900 students in grades 9–11. Construction continued into 1958. The school’s spacious gymnasium, auditorium, and activities area were made available to community activities. The first graduates were the Class of 1959.

Enrollment grew and, by 1960–61, there were 13 portables on the grounds. Enrollment peaked at 2,206 in 1962–63. An addition in 1969 gave the school a learning resource center and a business education area.

In the early 1970s, Sealth followed a unique schedule system, divided into seven periods. Only six periods met on a given day with one period omitted every day on a rotating basis. This gave students an opportunity to explore an additional subject.

In 1988, West Seattle parents debated a proposal to create a “mega-Sealth.” In the plan, West Seattle High School would close and its students consolidated at Sealth. Sealth, in turn, would expand into Denny Middle School, whose students would be sent Boren and Madison. The value of the larger school would have been in providing students a larger number of classes from which to choose. This plan did not become reality, however.



Sealth, 1973 SPSA 018-6

The first Family Fun Night at Sealth took place on May 6, 1994, and remains a tradition today. Since 1998, school highlights include an international studies program with a focus on foreign languages and language arts-social studies, and a performing arts magnet program with award-winning drama, band, choir, and jazz and string ensembles. An Academy of Travel and Tourism and Academy of Finance provide work training experience. An aerospace-aviation class uses flight simulators, and students work on assembling a helicopter at Boeing Field.

Sealth Stadium, which sits between the high school and Denny Middle School, is being revamped for the 2000–01 school year. Grass will be replaced with synthetic turf and new bleachers will be installed. The nearby Southwest Community Center and swimming pool are used by both schools.