



News Release

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Columbia Building Selected as Interim Site for The New School for 2007-2008 and 2008-2009

Seattle Public Schools (SPS) announced today that the Columbia building has been selected as the interim site for the New School while its permanent site at South Shore is under construction. In February, Seattle voters approved the Building Excellence III Capital Bond, which provides \$64.7 million for new construction of a K-8 at the South Shore site. The existing structure at South Shore, which has housed the New School since 2002, will be demolished this summer. The Columbia building remains slated for eventual closure. According to Seattle Parks and Recreation, the Rainier Beach Community Center and Pool will continue to remain in operation throughout the construction of the New School building.

The Columbia building is located just 2.5 miles north of the permanent South Shore site. Keeping the New School in Southeast Seattle provides students with continuity in their academic programs and will help maintain the school's connection to the Rainier Valley community.

"Every decision is driven by academic achievement," said Carla Santorno, SPS Chief Academic Officer. "We are particularly pleased that locating the New School at the Columbia facility while their permanent building is being constructed will keep our students close to their families and their community."

In the meantime, the alternative K-5 Orca program, currently residing at the Columbia building, will move this summer to its permanent location at Whitworth Elementary and will expand to K-8. Whitworth Elementary is merging with Dearborn Park Elementary at Dearborn Park.

Leaders in the Rainier Valley and Columbia City area welcome the New School community.

"This is wonderful news for Southeast Seattle," said Rebecca Sadinsky, Executive Director, Powerful Schools. "It means that what would have been a vacant building in the heart of the valley will be vibrant and well-used for two more years while the future fate of this site is discussed."

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