

Lawton

Name:	Lawton Elementary School	Enrollment:	390
Address:	4000 27th Avenue W	Nickname:	Dolphins
Configuration:	K-5	Colors:	Navy blue and white



Lawton, 2000 ©Mary Randlett SPSA 243-55

Before the landscape was altered with fill, the area now called Interbay was a low gully where the tideflats of Smith's Cove to the south almost met the water at Salmon Bay to the north. In the early 1880s, five families who resided in the area got together and rented a spare room in the Lindquist house for use as a classroom. The Lindquist house is said to have been near Salmon Bay where the railroad bridge now stands. Salmon Bay School opened some time after 1875 in a room in the log house for three months during the fall and another three in the spring. The spare room was no longer available in 1885, so a school-house was constructed at that time.

After it was annexed into the Seattle School District in 1891, the school served 32–36 students in grades 1–4 for a couple of years. Then it expanded to grades 1–8, still with only 32 students in one classroom. The school's population exploded in the 1902–03 school year. Despite a new temporary school called Interbay, opened just to the east in December 1902, Salmon Bay was packed with 161 students.

In 1908, a two-story brick building was constructed and the 1904 structure was sold and moved a short distance south, to 4064 Burton Place. The new school was called Lawton, as was the nearby Army post, after General Henry Ware Lawton, a military hero who served during the Spanish-American War in Cuba and the Philippines.

In 1913, the new school was closed, condemned for construction of the Great Northern Railroad cut and Gilmore Avenue. The railroad purchased a new site adjacent to the old one and deeded it to the school

Name: **Salmon Bay School**
 Location: 26th Avenue W and W Prospect
 Building: 1-room wood
 Architect: n.a.
 Site: 0.5 acre

1885: Opened
 1891: Annexed into Seattle School District on June 1
 1903: Renamed *Beecher* on March 7; name changed back to *Salmon Bay* on September 1
 1905: Site expanded
 1907: Referred to as *South Salmon Bay School*
 1908: Closed; building sold and moved
 Present: Old schoolhouse is private residence

Name: **Lawton School**
 Location: 25th Avenue W, just north of Elmore
 Building: 8-room, 2-story brick
 Architect: James Stephen
 Site: n.a.

1908: Named; opened
 1913: Closed and demolished



Lawton, 1911 MOHAI 83.10.8054.1

district, together with payment for the property taken. The new building, a twin of Alki, was erected at the south end of the property.

Lawton maintained a steady enrollment of about 300 until the 1930s when it dropped to less than 200. In 1939, Interbay School closed and most of its students transferred to Lawton, increasing enrollment again to over 300. Enrollment grew to over 500 in the 1940s and three portables were moved onto the grounds in 1948. The school became so crowded that one kindergarten class had to be sent to Magnolia one year and then to Briarcliff for part of the next. In 1950, a large addition provided nine new classrooms, a kindergarten, gym, and auditorium/lunchroom.

According to former principal W.E. Neutzmann, even in 1946 when he started there, Lawton was somewhat isolated and hidden in the woods. "Substitute teachers frequently had difficulty finding the school. Many children walked to and from school on trails through the woods." Enrollment at Lawton School was for many years affected by the population of military families housed at Fort Lawton. Children from the base were brought to the school on a bus provided by the Army.

During the early 1950s, the Lawton community developed a plan in cooperation with the Seattle Parks Department to provide additional playground space for the children. The city purchased 10 acres to the south of the school and the district acquired seven more acres across from the school, creating Lawton Neighborhood Park.

In 1952–53, Lawton became a K–6 school. Enrollment reached an all-time high of 744 in 1958–59. A new learning resources center opened in fall 1973 and two tennis courts were installed on the lower playfield as a memorial to a former student.

As part of the district's 1978 desegregation plan, Magnolia and Briarcliff were paired with Dearborn Park. In 1984, Magnolia and Briarcliff closed and Lawton was then paired with Dearborn Park as well, with K–3 students from Briarcliff and Magnolia coming to Lawton.

Plans for a new Lawton building began in the mid-1980s. During the 1987–88 school year, Lawton students and staff were housed at Briarcliff. They remained there for an extra year after construction was delayed because of an appeal. The 1913 building, which was judged to be seismologically unsound, was demolished along with the 1950 south wing. The lunchroom-auditorium and gymnasium were retained and modernized.

The new two-story brick structure, with classrooms, a learning resources center, and administration/staff areas, was built to the north of the gym and auditorium, on the former asphalt play area. Its red brick exterior is similar to that of the 1913 building. A blue metal roof brightens its appearance. An independent childcare center was constructed next to the gym. With a new orientation, the address was changed to 4000 27th Avenue W.

In a 1994 student election, Dolphins narrowly edged out Cheetahs as the school's nickname.

Today Lawton pupils learn computer skills and produce a weekly closed-circuit television newscast. Recently a Secret Garden project was developed on the grounds for outdoor education purposes. The school has also developed a model program for meeting the needs of special education and bilingual students in regular classes.



Lawton, ca. 1960 SPSA 243-60

Name: **Lawton School**
 Location: 4017 26th Avenue W
 Building: 9-room brick
 Architect: Edgar Blair
 Site: 3.2 acres

1913: Opened
 1950: Addition (Young & Richardson)
 1952-55: Site expanded to 5.09 acres
 1987: Closed in June; demolition of 1913 structure plus part of 1950 structure
 1990: Reopened in September with new addition (Cummings Associates Architects)



Lawton, 1960 SPSA 243-4