

Meany

Name:	Edmond S. Meany Middle School	Enrollment:	550
Address:	301 21st Avenue E	Nickname:	Jaguars
Configuration:	6–8	Colors:	Blue and silver
Newspaper:	none	Annual:	unnamed

The Capitol Hill area, so named because early Seattle residents hoped the territorial capitol might be built there, had only a few narrow dirt streets and a single cable car line on Madison Street when the Seattle School District acquired a site for a school on the hill's eastern edge.

Opened in 1902, 20th Avenue School was one of eight grade schools built to keep pace with the city's mushrooming population. These "model schools" followed a standard design that was easily expanded.

During its first year of operation, the 20th Avenue School had 549 students in grades 1–8 taught by 12 teachers. Midway through the first year, the name was changed to honor of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, a 19th century American poet, during a district shift to names from the American Hall of Fame. The first principal, Annie L. Gifford, had been teaching at Lake School when Superintendent Frank B. Cooper announced her appointment. She administered both schools until Lake got a new building (see McGilvra). She remained at Longfellow until 1936.

One student in those early days, Vera Waller (who later became a math teacher at Edmond S. Meany Junior High), recalled in an interview done in 1950:

I could never forget the assemblies, which were held in the halls...We sat on the steps leading to the upper floors. Back of the school on the northeast side was a pasture, where we used to play stump tag. A riding academy was in front of the building. Vacant lots and woods surrounded it on all sides. Picking blackberries was our common job going back and forth to school.

A new wing containing eight classrooms was added in 1907. In 1936, the school acquired a playground, which formerly had been the Seattle Riding and Driving Academy.

In 1941, the school's name was changed to Edmond S. Meany and it became a 7th and 8th grade center. Students in the first six grades were sent to neighboring schools, and 7th and 8th graders from Lowell, Minor, Montlake, Stevens, and Summit attended the center. The next year Madrona also sent its older grades. The main building was remodeled and a wing was added to accommodate the increased enrollment.

The school's namesake, Edmond Stephen Meany, came to Seattle July 10, 1877, as a young boy from Michigan. He attended Central I, a cramped two-room building where some classes were held in the attic. Meany's father, a steamboat captain, drowned in the Skagit River, and Edmond became the main support for his mother and younger siblings. Fortunately, he was able to complete his studies at the Territorial University, graduating in 1885. He served in the Washington State Legislature and helped select the new site for the University of Washington campus. An esteemed professor of history, Meany contributed much to scholarship in the area of Pacific Northwest history.

Name: **20th Avenue School**
Location: 301 21st Avenue E
Building: 12-room frame
Architect: E.W. Houghton
Site: 2.5 acres

1902: Opened
1903: Renamed *Longfellow* on March 7
1907: Addition (James Stephen)
1936: Site expanded
1941: Name changed to *Edmond S. Meany School* on July 21; addition (Naramore & Brady)
1945: Addition (n.a.)
1946: Became *Edmond S. Meany Junior High School*
1952: Site expanded to 5.67 acres
1955: Addition (John W. Maloney)
1962: 1902 section demolished; new central core opened in April (Edward Mahlum)
1971: Became *Edmond S. Meany Middle School*



20th Avenue School, 1902 SPSA 092-3

In 1945, an auditorium-gymnasium and two home economics classrooms were added. The following year 9th graders began attending and the name was changed to Edmond S. Meany Junior High. The building now housed 34 classrooms and two portables with a student population of 787. In 1955, a large “sawtooth” addition containing a library, and science, art, music, and industrial training rooms opened on the north side of the property. Enrollment at this time exceeded 1,000 students.

The school board approved plans for a new construction in October 1960. The later additions would remain but the 1902 building was torn down. Before the old structure met its demise, students researched the history of their school and prepared three copies of a book summarizing their findings. The books were bound with pieces of wood taken from the original school building.

Plans for the new school included conversion of the auditorium-gymnasium into a lunchroom-auditorium plus new classrooms, office facilities, and a new gymnasium. An agreement with Seattle Parks Department allowed for joint construction and use of these facilities. The new central core was a two-story brick structure.



Meany, ca. 1945 SPSA 109-9



Meany, 1960 SPSA 109-6



Meany, 1963 SPSA 109-3

During the 1960s, the nickname of Meany was the Shamrocks and the colors were green and white.

The Central Area School Council was formed in 1969 to give the community a stronger voice in the management of their schools. Meany and Madrona became linked as a middle school in 1970 for grades 5–8, with 7th and 8th grades housed at Meany. In September 1971, a middle school desegregation plan was launched with the busing of students from Eckstein, Hamilton, and Wilson to Meany as part of an effort to create more racially balanced learning environments. Meany also participated in the city-wide desegregation plan initiated in 1978 and the Controlled Choice plan of 1988.

In 1987, Meany won national recognition from the U.S. Department of Education as an exemplary secondary school. In spite of this, Meany's enrollment sank to 591 in 1989, the lowest of the district's ten middle schools.

In fall 1996, Superintendent John Stanford reorganized Meany as a math, science, and arts magnet school, bringing in new staff and funding for special programs. Enrollment rose to 618 students. A pilot



Meany, ca. 1970 SPSA 109-8

Montessori program began in 1998–99 in a single multigrade classroom. The school also boasts award-winning musical groups and an aviation training program, which integrates multiple subjects and hands-on activities. The aviation students build replica planes and hot air balloons, then go to Boeing Field for flying experience.