

# Northgate

Name:	<b>Northgate Elementary School</b>	Enrollment:	308
Address:	11725 1st Avenue NE	Nickname:	Eagles
Configuration:	K-6	Colors:	Blue and white



Northgate, 2000 ©Mary Randlett SPSA 257-6

After World War II, as the economy boomed and growth in suburban areas around Seattle accelerated, a new concept emerged to change the face of North America: the suburban shopping mall. America's first shopping mall, Northgate Shopping Center opened in 1950 on the suburban fringes of north Seattle. Northgate, a cluster of stores surrounded by ample parking with nearby highway access, became the model for regional shopping centers across the country. Northgate was an immediate success and led directly to growth in the surrounding area, both in terms of other businesses and new homes.

The rapid population growth led to overcrowding at Haller Lake, Pinehurst, and Oak Lake and forced the Shoreline School District to acquire a new elementary site in the Northgate area. The area was annexed into the City of Seattle in 1952. During summer 1953, the Seattle School District set up an all-portable school known as South Haller Lake School on the Shoreline District's site, known as Orr Park, at (N)E 120th and 1st Avenue NE. When the school opened in September 1953, it consisted of 14 portables and served 388 students.

The permanent name of Northgate School was chosen by the vast majority of the school's families, because of the school's proximity to the shopping center. It was officially named by the Seattle School Board on April 19, 1954. By September 1954, the school had grown to 465 students and three more portables were added.

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Name: **Northgate Elementary School**

Location: 11725 1st Avenue NE

Building: 18-room concrete

Architect: Paul Thiry

Site: 5.8 acres

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1956: Opened in June

1957–58: Site increased to 5.77 acres

1976: Closed on June 9; reopened in September

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During construction of a permanent building, a playground area stood between the portable school and the new building, which was located on the south half of the site. The new building had many modern architectural features. The kindergartners enjoyed their own private patio or schoolyard that was out of bounds to older children.

In January 1958, Northgate became part of a pilot program that provided a reading-improvement librarian with time to work with superior students. Thus the library “became the heart of the school.”

During a March 25, 1966 ceremony, 25 Norway maples were planted around the upper playfield. With construction of the I-5 freeway to the east and increasing commercial development around the shopping center, enrollment at Northgate had declined. In September 1966, Northgate received 25 pupils from the Central Area as part of the Voluntary Transfer Program. That number doubled by 1968. An accelerated program for high-achieving students also began in the mid-1960s. Children from surrounding schools entered at the beginning of the 2nd grade and took 2nd and 3rd grade in one year. In 1972–73, the enrollment totaled 335, including two special education classes. Classes for the learning impaired were integrated into the student body for certain activities.

Faced with budget restrictions and declining attendance district-wide, in 1973 the school board labeled Northgate for “possible closure” should the upcoming levy fail. The levy passed but, by spring 1973, the school again faced closure, and discussions continued on through the next summer. After a subsequent double levy failure, in February 1976, the school board voted to close Northgate for one year and disperse its students to Haller Lake and Pinehurst. Northgate closed in June 1976 but reopened the following September after a court ruling.

In accordance with the district’s desegregation plan, from 1978–1988, Northgate was paired with Graham Hill and became K, 4–6 with the south end school, which housed grades K–3.

Today Northgate has a diverse, multiethnic student population. Its state-of-the-art computer lab provides one computer per student. In a year-long Young Authors project, each child produces a book, story, and a set of poems that are typed, illustrated, bound, and presented to an audience.



Northgate, 1960 SPSA 257-3