

View Ridge

Name:	View Ridge Elementary School	Enrollment:	352
Address:	7047 50th Avenue NE	Nickname:	Otters
Configuration:	K-5	Colors:	none

Name: **View Ridge School**
 Location: 7047 50th Avenue NE
 Building: Portables
 Site: 9.5 acres

1944: Opened on November 10 as
 annex to Bryant
 1948: Closed in June



View Ridge, 1963 SPSA 277-1

In 1910, the area that would become View Ridge was still old growth forest. In the early 1930s, only a few farms dotted the undeveloped land above the Sand Point Naval Air Station. In 1936, two former radio station workers bought the hill between Wedgwood to the west and Hawthorn Hills to the south and settled there. At first, growth was slow, but it began to accelerate after the area was annexed into the City of Seattle in the mid-1940s.



View Ridge, 1948: Permanent building under construction in foreground PI Coll. MOHAI 25742



View Ridge, ca. 1970 SPSA 277-5

Children from View Ridge were bused to Bryant School. However, when Bryant became overcrowded, the search was on for a school site in View Ridge. A plot of state-owned land, part of which was being used as a ballfield, was selected.

When View Ridge School opened, children were able to walk to school, rather than take the bus. The school began with four portable classrooms for grades K–3 during the 1944–45 school year. In February 1945, two more portables were added, along with the 4th grade. The following September two more portables and the 5th grade was added. By fall 1946, the site contained 12 portables for grades K–6.

A permanent school was constructed on the same site. The *Seattle Times* proclaimed it the “latest in design,” “completely modern” with “trim lines and rows of high windows.” The *Seattle P-I* called it “streamlined” because all the classes were on one floor, and window space was maximized. Each room was specially painted in colors selected for its exposure. South-facing rooms were blue-green and gray-green. Halls were painted chartreuse. Northern rooms painted dusty-rose for warmth. The kindergarten was painted apricot, mostly because the architect thought the children would like it.

The population of View Ridge increased so rapidly while the school was being built that by opening day, it could not accommodate all the children of the area. During fall 1948, when the school held only grades K–7, two portables were already required. The next year the school was expanded to K–8.

By 1950, enrollment reached 765 and six portables were in use. Six sessions of kindergarten were held and 6th grade classes were housed in classrooms at Eckstein.

A 1951 addition provided six more classrooms. Even that was not enough. In 1952–53, the 7th and 8th grades were shifted to Eckstein, but enrollment continued to grow until it peaked at 1,206 in 1957–58. In fall 1960, a new classroom wing opened. The 1,123 students filled not only the new total of 26 regular classrooms but nine portables as well. Decatur School opened in 1961–62 to help relieve this overcrowding, and View Ridge enrollment dropped to 822. By 1969–70, it was down to 660.

Name: **View Ridge School**
 Location: 7047 50th Avenue NE
 Building: 12-room brick
 Architect: William Mallis
 Site: 9.5 acres

1948: Opened on September 13
 1951: Addition (Mallis & DeHart)
 1960: Addition (Mallis & DeHart)

View Ridge's 6th grade classes were transferred to Eckstein Middle School beginning with the 1971–72 school year. Moving into the vacated classrooms were 31 profoundly deaf children with six teachers and three assistants. This program used American Sign Language, which was new at the time. Two years later the program was expanded to serve 66 children, while the regular school enrolled 350 students. In 1976–77, a class of deaf-blind students was added. After Sand Point School closed in June 1988, its Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing program was moved to View Ridge.

Today View Ridge continues as a host school for hearing impaired students. The entire school has adopted the Comer School model in which the staff works to give students opportunities for leadership. The *Seattle P-I* reports that today “some of the neighborhood’s strongest ties are reserved for View Ridge Elementary School.”