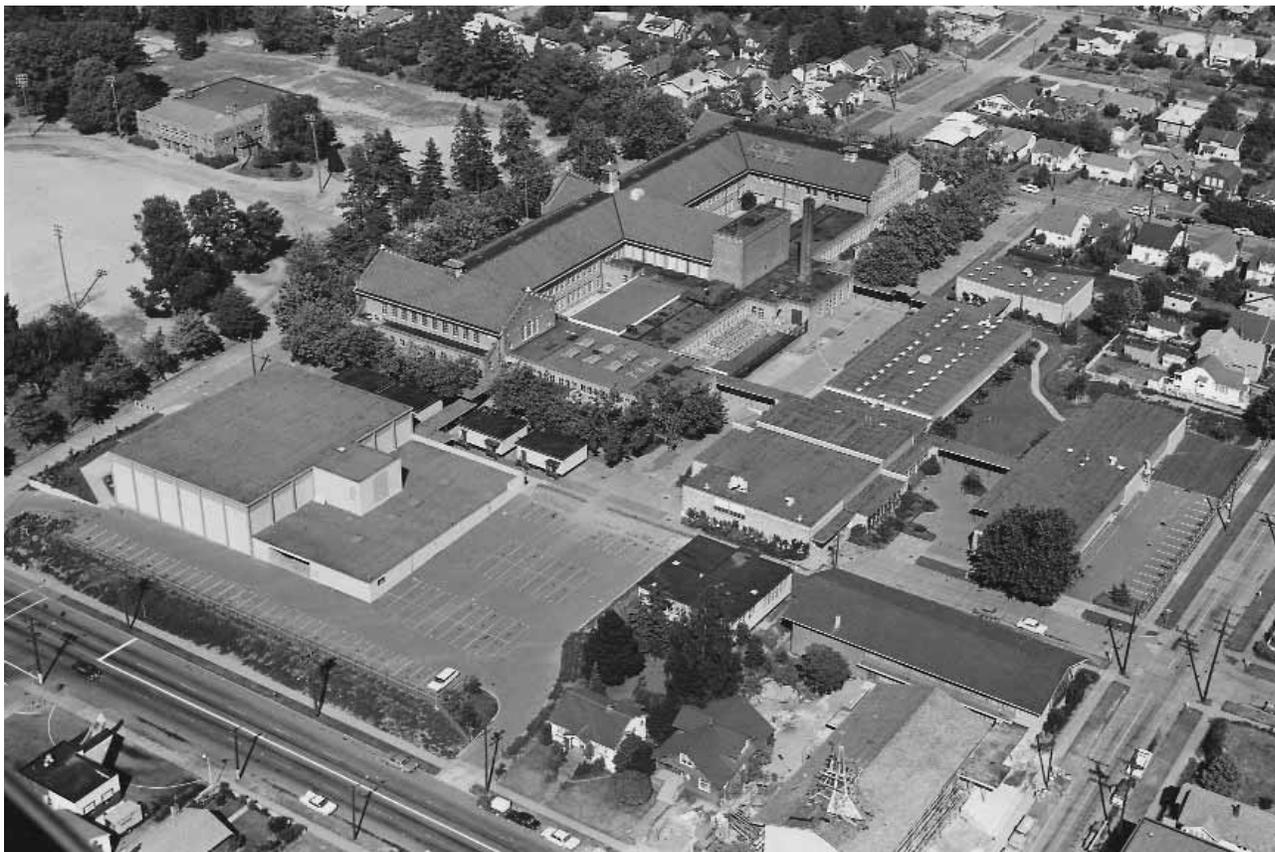


## West Seattle

Name:	<b>West Seattle High School</b>	Enrollment:	993
Address:	4075 SW Stevens Street	Nickname:	Indians
Configuration:	9–12	Colors:	Blue and gold
Newspaper:	<i>The Chinook</i>	Annual:	<i>Kimtah</i>



West Seattle, 1963 SPSA 019-10

In 1902, high school students living in West Seattle began attending the West Seattle School, a combined grammar and high school (see Lafayette). Their basketball games were played in a third-floor gym. W.T. Campbell, father of later Seattle Schools Superintendent Ernest W. Campbell, headed the high school program.

By 1908, when the school was annexed into Seattle, it held over 500 students. Twelve seniors graduated in 1910. Recognizing the need for a separate high school, in 1914 the district had purchased a site on the south side of the new Hiawatha Playfield. Overcrowding led to several portables jamming the site by 1915.

West Seattle High School opened in September 1917. The building had 38 classrooms, an auditorium, a library, a gymnasium, and offices. Its Renaissance architectural style is unique in the district, with a long horizontal exterior, pitched gable roofs, and metal cupola. It was Seattle's sixth new high school in 15 years. Most of the 409 students attending the first year were girls because many boys had enlisted to fight in the war or gone to work.

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Name: **West Seattle High School**  
Location: 4075 SW Stevens Street  
Building: 38-room reinforced  
concrete and masonry  
Architect: Edgar Blair  
Site: 3.5 acres

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1917: Opened in September  
1924: Addition (Floyd  
A. Naramore)  
1928: Site expanded to 5.6 acres  
1930: On-site annex opened  
1948: Site expanded to 8.6 acres  
1954: Addition (NBBJ)  
1959: Addition (Theo Damm)  
1981: Designated a Seattle historic  
landmark

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West Seattle, ca. 1917 SPSA 019-5



West Seattle, ca. 1917 SPSA 019-23

World War I brought an influx of workers to West Seattle's booming shipyards and steel mills. Enrollment at the high school increased dramatically and showed no signs of stopping. By 1923–24, more than 1,200 students attended West Seattle High School. Several portable classrooms were in use, including a temporary gymnasium.

An addition, designed to accommodate 500 more students, opened in 1924. This east wing matched the style of the original structure and contained 13 classrooms, a lunchroom, and girls' gymnasium.

Student government, clubs, and other activities got underway during these early years. The Cooperative School Government consisted of an executive branch (the student body officers and appointed commissioners) and a legislative branch (elected representatives from each homeroom). The Boys' Club and Girls' Club were especially active in sponsoring a variety of activities, such as the annual Harvest Moon Ball.

A wooden annex, with eight classrooms and a study hall, was added in 1930 to replace seven portables. From 1935–38, enrollment exceeded 1,800 as many graduates stayed in school because they couldn't find reasonable jobs. Artist Jacob Elshin created murals for the hallway entrance to the auditorium depicting scenes of early Seattle in a 1937 WPA-sponsored Federal Art Project. (These murals were "rediscovered" during preparations for the 2000 remodel.)

With its expanded facility, West Seattle High School continued to grow. By the mid-1950s enrollment hovered around 2,000. Activities popular in the 1950s included the Pow-wow, an annual talent show held each March, and West Seattle Day.

In 1954, three detached structures were built to the south of the original building, housing industrial arts shops, science labs, music rooms, study halls, and a lunch room. The old study hall became an auditorium and the lunchroom was transformed into a library. The library was named after A. Lyle Kaye, a respected former vice principal. A new gymnasium was built in 1959.

Gordon Hannaford served as principal from 1958 until his retirement in 1970. Hannaford started as a teacher there in 1928 and was a fixture for generations of West Seattleites. He believed strongly in the



West Seattle, ca. 1970 SPSA 019-21

equality of women's sports, so today there is a Hannaford Woman Athlete of the Year Award.

The 1965 earthquake forced the closure of three portable classrooms and temporary evacuation of the rest of the school. In 1972, the interior of the original building was remodeled, creating an enlarged library and a student activity center. A double portable was moved onto the campus in 1975 to provide space for a preschool laboratory, which operated in conjunction with a parent cooperative preschool.

A change in the nickname for the school has been considered several times beginning in 1989. Sensitivity to cultural stereotyping led to referendums on retiring the "Indians" as a symbol, but supporters of the change lost by narrow margins.

A new class schedule was introduced in fall 1994. Instead of the usual six periods of 50 minutes each, the new schedule comprises four 85-minute periods. All freshmen enroll in a blocked Humanities program and seniors are required to complete a Senior Project.

West Seattle's assistant principal, Betty Howell Gray, received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Alliance of Black School Educators in 1999 for her many contributions to minority student programs.

Studies conducted in the early 1990s indicated that West Seattle High School needed major renovations to make the facility seismically safe and up to the standards of modern teaching. The current plan calls for renovation of the 1917 and 1925 buildings. A new gymnasium will be constructed, the boys' gym on the west side of the school will be demolished, and the girls' gym will be transformed into a library. Classrooms will be arranged in clusters to allow for greater cross-disciplinary instruction.

The two-year project began in the summer of 2000. West Seattle classes will be held at Boren during the interim.