

Beacon Hill

Name:	Beacon Hill Elementary School	Enrollment:	366
Address:	2025 14th Avenue S	Nickname:	Tigers
Configuration:	K-5	Colors:	Blue and gold

Beacon Hill was named by financier M. Harwood Young after a favorite landmark in his hometown of Boston. Boston's Beacon Hill was named for the beacon at its summit in the earliest colonial period.

The population on Seattle's Beacon Hill grew in the early 1890s when a streetcar line extended to the neighborhood from downtown. Land for the first school on the hill was purchased by the district in 1892. During the planning stage, it was called Bay Side School because it was in the Bay Side Addition.

The first Beacon Hill School was a two-room, wood pavilion. It opened with three classes, expanded to 100 students in grades 1-5 during 1901-02 and doubled in enrollment the following year when it went to grades 1-8.



Beacon Hill, ca. 1971 SPSA 205-15

A substantial new building opened in 1904. It was built in the Colonial Revival style with a design based on James Stephen's model school plan. Its rectangular structure allowed for future additions to be connected to the original core as the school population grew.

In 1906, the school board proposed removing the 1899 schoolhouse. Not satisfied with the bids they received, they kept the building. A 1912 addition to the newer building added 12 classrooms and com-

Name: **Beacon Hill School**
 Location: 16th S and Lander
 Building: 2-room wood
 Architect: n.a.
 Site: 3.07 acres

1899: Opened
 1904: Closed in spring
 1916: Reopened as an annex
 1971: Closed
 1977: Became part of El Centro de la Raza
 1988: Destroyed by fire on August 8

Name: **Beacon Hill School**
 Location: 2524 16th Avenue S
 Building: 8-room wood
 Architect: Saunders & Lawton
 Site: 3.07 acres

1904: Opened; named on September 7
 1912: Addition (Edgar Blair)
 1931: Addition (Floyd A. Naramore)
 1971: Closed in March
 1972: Occupied in October by Chicano community
 1999: Sold to El Centro de la Raza

pleted the “H” shape with a north block and connecting wing. Enrollment in the enlarged 20-room structure was only 402 pupils, so at first some rooms stood empty. The first kindergarten class at Beacon Hill began in 1913.

By 1916, enrollment had reached nearly 500 and all classrooms were put to use, including the old building. During the 1918–19 school year, the school was so crowded that the board voted to send Beacon Hill 8th graders to Summit School for the year. The following year the Robert Fulton School was opened as an emergency annex at 24th Avenue S and Stevens Street. The 1899 structure at Beacon Hill was subsequently converted to house domestic science classes in one room and manual training classes in the other.

Several portable buildings had been brought in by 1926 to accommodate the school’s population of over 800. With numbers continuing to increase, some minor alterations were made to the building in 1931, including adding some small rooms to the east. Enrollment at Beacon Hill peaked at 928 students in 1931–32. Gym classes were held in a rickety old portable, which was so cramped that most exercises were of the stationary variety.

During the 1930s, boys playing softball attempted to belt home-runs over the roof of the 1899 building. Only the most athletic succeeded. At that time, there were few children of color at Beacon Hill School. According to journalist Don Duncan, “We had a few Japanese students, no blacks. The Japanese invariably were the best scholars. And the Japanese boys were very good in sports. A boy had a much rougher time if he wore eyeglasses than if he had a non-white skin.”

By 1952, grades 7 and 8 no longer attended the school. Crowded conditions were not alleviated, however. In 1960, the district opened a portable school of eight classrooms on the former site of Robert Fulton School. Housing over 200 students, this was first known as Beacon Hill Annex and later developed into Kimball School.

A new Beacon Hill Elementary School was constructed several blocks to the northwest of the earlier school buildings, with an “open concept” floorplan. Large teaching areas, called “pods,” held up to three classes each.

One proposal made for the 1904 building was that it serve a few years as a pilot “middle school” for 5th and 6th graders before being torn down. A federal antipoverty program was abruptly curtailed in fall



Beacon Hill, 1960 SPSA 205-14



Beacon Hill, ca. 1940: 1904 building (left), 1899 building (right) SPSA 205-12



Beacon Hill, 1968 SPSA 205-16

Name: **Beacon Hill
Elementary School**
 Location: 2025 14th Avenue S
 Building: Brick
 Architect: Durham, Anderson & Freed
 Site: 1.9 acres

1971: Opened in March

1972 ending the English and Adult Education Program at South Seattle Community College. As a result, about a dozen Latino students and their supporters occupied the 1904 building for three months. This was the birth of El Centro de la Raza, a social and cultural center for the Latino community, which still operates at the site today.

Beginning in 1978, Beacon Hill (K, 4–6) formed a triad with Gene-see Hill (K–3) and Schmitz Park (K–3) for desegregation purposes. Starting in September 1985, all kindergartners were sent to Beacon Hill.

In 1993–94, Beacon Hill became one of eight magnet schools in the district. New technology helped create innovative programs, such as a student-operated bookstore. The Beacon Hill community has created a model for educational reform, and academic test scores have risen dramatically. There is active parent participation in school activities, and students are required to wear uniforms. In contrast to the 1930s, about half the students are Asian American.