

# Brighton

Name:	<b>Brighton Elementary School</b>	Enrollment:	308
Address:	4425 S Holly Street	Nickname:	Dragons
Configuration:	K-5	Colors:	Navy blue and white



Brighton, 1904 Rainier Valley Historical Society 94.05.01

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Name: **Brighton School**  
 Location: 4425 S Holly Street  
 Building: 1-room, 2-story wood  
 Architect: James Stephen  
 Site: 1.9 acres

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1904 or 1905: Opened by Columbia School District  
 1907: Annexed into Seattle School District  
 1909: Addition (James Stephen)  
 1917: Site expanded to 3.77 acres  
 1948: Damaged by fire  
 1949: Brick addition (Young & Richardson)  
 1953: Addition (J. Lister Holmes, McClure, Adkinson & MacDonald)

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In 1890, settler Everett Smith platted 40 acres along the shores of Lake Washington and named the area Brighton Beach after a popular English seaside resort south of London. Smith and other landowners helped build an electric railway to connect their settlement with Seattle. This railway ran down what later became Rainier Avenue.

The first building to be named Brighton School was built in 1901 at 51st and Graham Streets, near the top of Graham Hill (see Graham Hill). The first school in Brighton Beach was a temporary facility in the basement of a church. It opened in fall 1903 as an annex to Columbia School.

This one-room structure closed when a new Brighton School opened in 1904 or 1905 on Holly Street at the site of the present school. The new Brighton was surrounded by a wooden fence used to keep out the cows that roamed the area. In late August 1906, the board of Columbia School District No. 18 voted to discontinue high school classes at Brighton and to pay tuition for those students at Seattle High School.

The older building on Graham Street, then called Brighton Beach, was used as an annex from fall 1907 until early 1909 when a second story was added at the Holly Street facility. The expanded building had a total of eight classrooms.

Shortly after World War I, from 1918 to 1922, the Graham Street building, by then called Brighton Annex, housed an overflow of students. A separate one-story brick structure at the rear of the main building was built in response to the overflow in 1922. The new building contained six classrooms and an auditorium/lunchroom. The enlarged Brighton had an enrollment of 440 students in grades 1-8.

After World War II, Brighton was again crowded. During



Brighton, ca. 1940 SPSA 207-6

1945–46, the 6th and 7th grades were sent to two vacant rooms at Whitworth. On the evening of September 22, 1946, an arson fire swept through the frame portion of Brighton School, destroying about 65 percent of the structure. As a result of the fire, almost 300 students were left without classrooms. They were placed in portables or sent to neighboring schools until September 9, 1949, when a newly renovated Brighton opened its doors.

The building was extensively remodeled and included six more classrooms, a gymnasium, and administrative offices. On opening day, construction workers raced to complete their work, maneuvering wheelbarrows of mortar around groups of children, but the confusion soon settled down, and Brighton staff and students enjoyed their new school equipped with modern blonde furniture, inlaid linoleum, and a sink in every room.

Enrollment at Brighton reached 715 in 1952–53 and an addition of eight classrooms was necessary. The post-war boom continued until 1956–57 when Brighton’s enrollment reached 1,032. The following year the Graham Street site held portables and was called East Brighton. The opening of Graham Hill School on that site in 1961 reduced Brighton’s enrollment to less than 800.

In 1971, Wing Luke and Dearborn Park opened nearby and Brighton’s enrollment further decreased to 490. In 1972, Brighton was designated a basic skills center where programs would be developed on a demonstration basis. One of these programs brought students from throughout Rainier Valley for instruction aimed at overcoming language learning disabilities.

In September 1978, Brighton formed a triad relationship with

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Name: **Brighton School**  
 Location: 4425 S Holly Street  
 Building: 7-room, 1-story brick  
 Architect: n.a.

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1922: Opened  
 1949: Attached to other structure  
 to form single building

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West Queen Anne and Hay for the purpose of desegregation. A total of 35 students participated that first year and, in 1980, over half of the students at Brighton came by bus from the two Queen Anne school areas.

Brighton underwent a facelift in 1989–90. A new fence enclosure was installed to circle the playground areas “to make sure that our children feel safe.” With assistance from a City of Seattle grant, the PTA installed new play equipment, and a garden and benches were also added to the grounds. Today the garden has become a focus of learning activity; students plant flower bulbs in the fall, and some classes grow flowers from seed in their classrooms to be transplanted to the garden in the spring.

Current programs at Brighton include a schoolwide theme selected each year and a Future Science and Engineers of America program. Nine classrooms are partnered with crew members on a Coast Guard ice breaker for e-mail correspondence. Students wear uniforms and a daycare center is housed in the building.



Brighton, ca. 1950 SPSA 207-7