

South Shore

Name:	South Lake Alternative High School @ South Shore	Enrollment:	91
Address:	8825 Rainier Avenue	Nickname:	Sharks
Configuration:	6–12	Colors:	Blue and white
Newspaper:	none	Annual:	none



South Shore, 2001 ©Mary Randlett SPSA 130-11

Name: **Model Middle School**
 Location: 8633 53rd Avenue S
 Building: Portables

1970: Opened in September
 1971: Renamed *South Shore Middle School* on August 25
 1973: Closed as middle school
 1974–75: Alternative school site

In 1967, Rainier Beach Junior and Senior High School was overcrowded, housing 2,159 students in a building designed for 1,500. The principal, Don Means, led a push for a separate school for younger students. Planners felt that 9th graders were too mature to be among the younger students, so they envisioned that the new middle school would serve as a pilot educational center. The middle school would house an interdisciplinary team of teachers who instructed the same group of students throughout the day in basic subjects, thus being “more like elementary schools” than the old junior highs.

On St. Valentine’s Day, 1968, the school board authorized planning for a Southeast Education Center of which the middle school would be the key. Several years of planning and changes in leadership followed. In the meantime, a portable school was constructed. The school was scheduled to open in September 1970, but due to a number of circumstances, construction was delayed. That fall the Model Middle School opened for 300 7th graders in portables on the grounds at Rainier Beach.

A contest was held among the middle school students and 6th graders at feeder elementary schools (Dunlap, Rainier View, Emerson, and Wing Luke) to choose a permanent name for the school. The name South Shore, describing the school’s location near the south end of Lake Washington, beat Parkway, Martin Luther King, and Marie McCloud (a past teacher at Rainier View).

Name: **South Shore
Middle School**
Location: 8825 Rainier Avenue S
Building: 1-story open concept
Architect: Naramore, Bain, Brady
& Johanson
Site: 11 acres

1973: Opened on December 10
1999: Closed as middle school in
June; opened in September
as alternative school and
temporary relocation site

The next fall the school was expanded to grades 7 and 8. When additional portables to house the incoming 7th graders were not ready in time, pupils had to go to double shifts. When they arrived, the groups of portables were joined together in “pods” of four, divided into “houses,” with a team of teachers in each “house.”

The permanent school, designed for 1,200 students in grades 5–8, was the first in the district designed expressly as a middle school. The main room of the open concept school was roughly a triangle, 1.5 acres in size and about 320 feet across at its maximum width. Of the feeder schools, only Wing Luke was an open concept school, so the experience was new to most entering students. Eventually the school housed grades 6–8.

At the time, South Shore was heralded as “possibly the most significant new school ever opened in the Seattle School District.” The basic structure of the school was wood frame, with heavy, exposed timber trusses and columns. Open wood trussed beams were designed by computer for stress tolerance. Bright colors were used throughout the interior. Covering the floor of the main room was a multi-colored rug with stripes of pink, purple, rust, two shades of green, and two shades of blue. Student lockers were made of wood and plastic to reduce noise over the usual metal lockers.

The building is jointly owned and operated by the district and parks department. At the Rainier Beach Community Center end of the building is a pool and three special rooms. Students were given morning use of the parks department swimming pool. The school was completed six months behind schedule, and students shifted over from the portables midway through the 1973–74 school year. American Indian Heritage moved into the portables from Georgetown the following September.

In 1980–81, South Shore was able to attract “voluntary racial transfers from all over Seattle and from suburban school districts” through its Horizon Program for highly capable students. South Shore was the district’s first secondary school to require students to wear uniforms.



South Shore, ca. 1973 SPSA 130-4



South Shore, 1974 SPSA 130-2

In fall 1999, South Shore relocated to Sharples (see Kurose). The open concept floor plan no longer worked for the program. In turn, the South Shore building became the new home of the alternative programs housed at Sharples as well as the one-year temporary home of Dunlap Elementary. The alternative high school, renamed South Lake, is an individualized continuous progress approach and serves students who need an option to the regular school program. It also provides reentry services for students suspended or expelled from other schools. The Dunlap students returned to their newly renovated school in September 2000. Emerson students will use South Shore as an interim site for school year 2000–01.