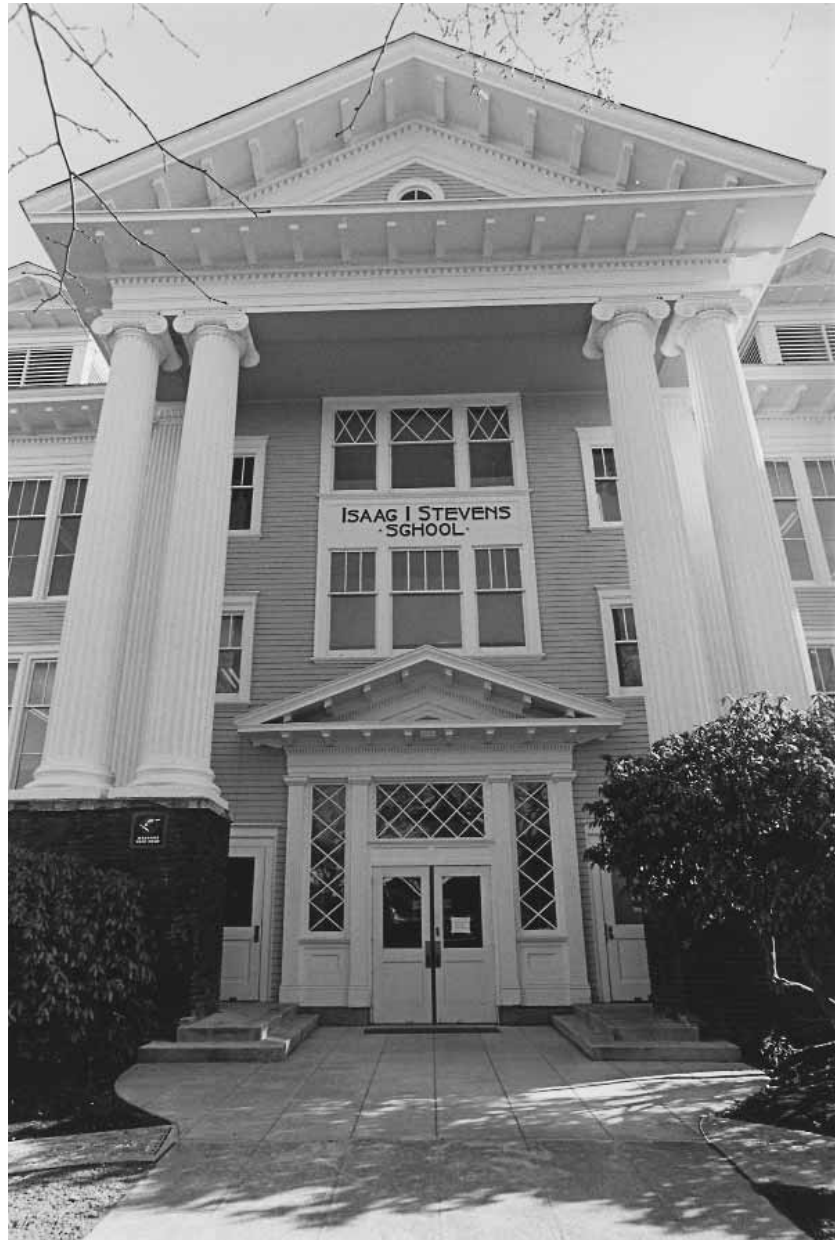


Stevens

Name:	Stevens Elementary School	Enrollment:	283
Address:	144 NE 54th Street	Nickname:	none
Configuration:	K-5	Colors:	none

Name: **Isaac I. Stevens School**
 Location: 1242 18th Avenue E
 Building: 8-room, 2-story wood
 Architect: James Stephen
 Site: 1.4 acres

1906: Named on March 12;
 opened in September
 1922: Site expanded to 2.42 acres
 1928: Addition (Floyd
 A. Naramore)
 1981: Exteriors designated city
 landmark on April 8
 1999: Closed



Stevens, 2000 ©Mary Randlett SPSA 272-18

In the early 1900s, people were attracted to the north end of Capitol Hill because of Volunteer Park, which was named for the volunteers who fought in the Spanish-American War of 1898. In 1904, the school board purchased a site for a future North Capitol Hill School. Two years later, the school was named for Isaac Ingalls Stevens, the first Territorial Governor of Washington.

Stevens grew up on a small farm in Massachusetts and graduated from West Point in 1839, the first in his class. In 1853, he was appointed governor of the newly created Washington Territory. At the same time, he directed an exploration party for the Pacific Railway across largely uncharted country between St. Paul and Puget Sound. In 1854 and 1855, he made treaties with the Native Americans of the Territory, acquiring title to 100,000 square miles of land and paving the way for white settlement.

Stevens School opened in fall 1906 for students from north Capitol Hill and Interlaken, which included Montlake. Its rectangular, two-story frame building with clapboard siding and gable roof adhered to the Colonial Revival style and was almost identical to Coe.

Shortly thereafter, people of the neighborhood formed an organization called “The Patrons and Friends of Stevens School” (the predecessor of the current PTA). In 1911, this group expressed interest in establishing a “fresh air” school, a concept popular at the time, and, as a result, a portable was moved to Stevens from Lincoln for an open air room (see Hay). The Friends of Stevens group held no night meetings because there was no lighting system at the school.

As more people moved into the area in the 1920s, the site was expanded to allow for an addition. The building was expanded in 1928 with a small, single-story addition containing an auditorium-lunchroom, three classrooms, and an office suite. A single-story extension on the east side of the basement level added play courts.

Kindergarten classes began at Stevens in September 1936. Because the school was built without areas for a shop or home economics, its 7th and 8th graders began attending those classes one hour a day at Longfellow in 1938. In September 1941, those two grades were transferred from Stevens to the newly renamed Edmond S. Meany School to the south.

Enrollment increased slowly but steadily to over 500 in the late 1950s, and several portables were added. In 1959–60, a new kindergarten room was constructed in the basement. In 1966, the first Stevens School reunion was held. Several hundred people assembled for the 60th anniversary celebration to enjoy a spaghetti dinner and meet with old friends.

Stevens became a K–4 school in 1970 when schools in the Central Area were reorganized into a 4-4-4 format. Most 5th and 6th graders from Stevens went to Madrona Middle School, while 3rd and 4th graders were bused to Stevens from Harrison, which became a K–2 center. Stevens had 11 portables in 1983–84, some of which were 30-years old. These portables housed 40 percent of the students.

An alternative program called TOPS (The Option Program at Stevens) began in 1983–84. The program encouraged student responsibility and leadership skills. Key objectives focused on child-motivated learning experiences, understanding the urban environment, and a multicultural perspective. For example, TOPS 3rd-5th graders spent time investigating the Seattle environment. From a makeshift classroom in the Great Western Building, they rated downtown buildings, offering opinions ranging from the availability of restroom facilities to the cheerfulness of occupants. Findings were presented to Mayor Charles Royer.

During its first year, TOPS had about 125 students (K–5), and the regular program at Stevens had 175 students. In 1990–91, TOPS



Stevens, ca. 1940 SPSA 272-3



Stevens, 1960 SPSA 272-2

became an alternative elementary and middle school program using portables. Two portables stood in the NE corner of the site, and four others were located in the SE corner, linked by a raised wood deck. Adding 6th grade the first year, 7th and 8th graders were added each year following. TOPS moved to Seward in 1991–92.

In 1991, residents in the neighborhood raised nearly \$27,000 to repaint the landmark building. In 1996, the landmarks board approved a school district plan to renovate Stevens, including demolition of the 1928 addition. The 1906 structure will be strengthened and modernized. A new three-story wing, designed by Arai Jackson Architects will be constructed for additional classrooms, along with a gymnasium-cafeteria and childcare center. The renovated school will reopen in September 2001. Stevens students are being housed at McDonald during the renovation.

A towering red cedar, which grew close to the school, had to be removed during renovation. Its trunk has been carved into a Northwest Coast-style totem pole by Tlingit carver, Myron Barnes, and his apprentice, Tony Rath, with some assistance from Stevens students. The pole features a bear cub, mother bear, and a human figure with an eagle at the top. It will stand inside the new building.