

Whitman

Name:	Whitman Middle School	Enrollment:	1,141
Address:	9201 15th Avenue NW	Nickname:	Wildcats
Configuration:	6-8	Colors:	Blue and gold
Newspaper:	<i>The Source</i>	Annual:	unnamed



Whitman, 1959 SPSA 115-38

With the prospect of the Olympic Golf Course being sold to a real estate developer in May 1950, the U.S. Army announced its interest in taking over part of the land for a Nike missile base. National defense concerns ran strong at that time because of hostilities arising in Korea and the fear of atomic weapons. The following day the Seattle School Board announced it too was interested in acquiring property there.

The Army eventually condemned part of the golf course and placed an anti-aircraft facility on the tract. Later, the Army sold land back to the district with the agreement that 3.34 acres on the eastern parcel would be leased back to them. Local residents convinced the Seattle City Council to buy 10.3 acres for a playfield (Soundview Park), and the balance of the golf course was developed into Olympic Manor.

The district's purchase consisted of an eastern parcel next to the park and a western parcel. In 1953, Northwest Elementary School (a.k.a. Crown Hill Annex) was established on the eastern parcel at 15th Avenue NW and (N)W 92nd Street to handle the overflow of students at Crown Hill School. Students purchasing hot lunches ran over to Crown Hill at lunchtime.

A few years after the portable school closed, the site for the permanent elementary school was shifted to the western parcel (see North Beach). The eastern parcel was then developed for its intended use, as the site for a junior high school.

The temporary name used during planning was Northwest Junior High School. On June 21, 1956, the parks department named the adjacent site "North Hills Playfield" and expressed its hope to the school board that "a name could be selected that would be applicable to both the playfield and . . . junior high school."

A list of possible names for the school was submitted to seven elementary schools in the service area for the school. The name Marcus

Name: **Marcus Whitman Junior High School**
Location: 9201 15th Avenue NW
Building: Light-steel frame, reinforced cement & brick
Architect: Mallis & DeHart
Site: 15 acres

1959: Named on May 20; opened in September
1981: Became *Marcus Whitman Middle School*

Whitman won while David Douglas was the runner-up. Whitman was a Protestant missionary who, with his wife Narcissa, arrived in Washington in 1836 and established a mission near Walla Walla. They were among those killed by an Indian attack in 1847.

The school opened in 1959–60 with 1,400 students. The song “Salute to Whitman”, written by music teacher Robert Cathey, premiered at the dedication ceremony on November 19.

In 1961–62, two years after its doors opened, Whitman enrollment stood at 1,513 and classrooms were completely full. Some classes were held in such unique locations as the teachers’ workroom and the lunchroom. The overcrowding was resolved in 1963–64 with the opening of R.H. Thomson Junior High School.

In 1972, as declining enrollments forced the district to close some schools, the prospect of making Whitman Junior High a four-year high school was raised because Whitman’s enrollment was down to 950. This prompted a negative response from the Olympic Manor Community Club, and the school remained a junior high. In 1981, Whitman became a middle school, housing grades 7–8. Following a district-wide change, 6th graders were added in 1987–88.

Beginning in 1996–97, a new track, soccer field, and baseball field were built west of the school in a PTA project that relied on contributions from community organizations. Today approximately 16 percent of the students are in the Spectrum program for the highly capable. Whitman’s 6th graders who demonstrate good citizenship and good academic effort can attend a camp at Warm Beach at the end of the school year.



Whitman, 1972 SPSA 115-44