

# Blaine

Name: Catharine Blaine K-8 School	Enrollment: 533
Address: 2550 34 <sup>th</sup> Avenue W	Nickname: Tigers
Configuration: K-8	Colors: Orange, blue and white



Blaine, 2000 ©Mary Randlett SPSA 101-75

Following World War II, the Magnolia community wanted both a broad recreational program for its youth and a secondary school to keep students in the community, rather than sending them to Queen Anne High School for 8th grade.

The enrollment at two local elementary schools, Lawton and Magnolia, had increased to such an extent that a third school, Briarcliff, was built in 1949. Even with this addition, there would not be enough room for 7th graders after 1951. The Seattle School Board recognized that a junior high school serving 1,000 pupils was needed to house the growing population.

Property owned by the Seattle Parks Department at 34th Avenue W between W Raye and W Dravus streets was centrally located and ideal for a joint school and recreation project. The project as presented in 1949 utilized a patchwork of district-owned property as well as property leased from the city. The architect's plans were accepted in time for the school to open in 1951, but delays caused by opposition from some Magnolia residents postponed the building's completion for one year. Nevertheless, when final agreement was reached, it was nearly unanimous. It was the first school west of the Mississippi to be planned and financed jointly by a school district and a parks department, with all facilities included under one roof.

Catherine Blaine Junior High School was named after Catharine Paine Blaine, a proponent for women's rights and one of the 100 signers of the Declaration of Sentiments for women's rights from the Seneca Falls Convention. Catharine was also the first teacher to establish a school in pioneer Seattle, nearly 100 years earlier. Catharine P. Blaine's husband was Seattle's first minister. Both her 90-year-old son, Edward L. Blaine Sr., and her grandson, Edward L. Blaine Jr., participated in the dedication of the school.

The school building included regular classrooms, music rooms, science rooms, art rooms, a library, two gymnasiums that opened onto each other to become one large court, a spacious office suite, and custodial quarters. There is also an auditorium/lunchroom with kitchen facilities at one end and a stage at the other. The City of Seattle Parks Department-owned community center wing contains large rooms, offices, a kitchen, and a lobby.

Catherine Blaine Junior High opened with a student body of 534. Claude Turner, former principal at Magnolia who helped to plan the new junior high, became the first principal. The staff included 17 teachers, a librarian, counselor, and secretary along with lunchroom and custodial staff, and three parks department employees. At first, the school housed grades 5 to 9. A 5th grade class and 6th grade class from Lawton and a 6th grade class from Briarcliff attended Blaine to relieve congestion in those two schools. These classes followed the elementary program in self-contained classrooms, while the rest of the school followed the regular departmentalized program of a junior high school. Sixth grade classes continued at Blaine until 1955.

During its first year, Blaine set up a student council, a Boys Club, and a Girls Club. In partnership with the community, the students authored and adopted a code of conduct. At the same time, the community adopted a creed and code as a standard of operation for the families of Magnolia. The Pioneer, a student-published paper, was launched the first year. Students and faculty also established an annual Pioneer Day to honor Catherine P. Blaine. On this day, faculty and students dressed as pioneers and participated in a program reminiscent of times past.

From 1978-81, Blaine housed grades 5-9, taking in students from Briarcliff and Hawthorne. With this new configuration, its name was changed to Blaine Intermediate Center/Junior High. In September 1981, the 5th grade classes were returned to Briarcliff.

In February 1982, when school board members considered closing the school due to declining enrollment, they also expressed concern that the school would automatically revert to city ownership upon closure based on terms outlined in the district's lease of city-owned land. However, Mayor Charles Royer issued a promise that the city would not "re-capture" the building. When Blaine closed in June 1982, its 7th and 8th graders were sent to McClure, and incoming 6th graders were assigned to Briarcliff.

In 1983, Blaine was the temporary home of students from Green Lake Elementary, which closed in February because of chemical contamination in carpets at the school. The following September, Briarcliff closed and the Hawthorne students who had been attending Briarcliff moved to Blaine, which reopened for K-6 elementary students. Hawthorne students continued at Blaine until a new Hawthorne opened in 1989.

A technology levy in 1991 provided Blaine with a new computer lab and teacher. Later, the inner courtyard was refurbished as an outdoor classroom by the PTA, complete with resident rabbits. An old tradition, Pioneer Day, was reinstated in March 1994, featuring pioneer crafts and activities.

In fall 1997, Blaine added 7th grade classes. The following year 8th grade classes returned. Blaine thus became the district's first non-alternative K-8 school since 1951-52.

## Details:

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Name: **Catherine Blaine  
Junior High School**  
 Location: 2550 34th Avenue W  
 Building: 20-room brick  
 Architect: J. Lister Holmes & Associates  
 Site: 8.35 acres

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1950: Named on May 5  
 1952: Opened on September 3  
 1978: Renamed Blaine Intermediate Center/Junior High  
 1982: Closed in June  
 1983: Interim site for Green Lake Elementary  
 1984: Reopened as Catherine Blaine Elementary in September  
 1998: Renamed with spelling correction: Catharine Blaine K-8 School  
 2009: Science classrooms upgraded; four new classrooms added  
 2019: Seismic Upgrade

In 2009, science classrooms were upgraded, including new sinks, countertops, and cabinets. Four new classrooms were added, and new flooring was installed in the corridors, main office and lunchroom.

Catharine Blaine's enrollment hit a peak in 2018-19 with 757 students. The opening of Magnolia Elementary the following year and the impact of COVID-19 over the next two years dropped Blaine's enrollment to a low of 461 in 2021-22. Blaine's enrollment is expected to grow slowly over the next five years, with an increasingly diverse student body.

A staff committee investigated the process for a possible school name change in 2021-22. The committee ultimately decided the desire for a new name didn't outweigh the challenges or the impact on countless alumni.

In the 2021-22 school year, Blaine offered 14 community programs for students, including the Drama Education Enrichment Program provided by Stone Soup Theatre, the Funding Urban Nature (FUN) program provided by the Seattle Audubon Society, and Writers in School provided by Seattle Arts & Lectures Youth Programs.

The school district has maintained an enrollment model for Catharine Blaine in which the K-5 portion of the school has students assigned as a neighborhood school, while the middle school portion of the school is a 'choice school' for students.



Blaine, 1960 SPSA 101-2