

Bryant

Name: William Cullen Bryant Elementary School	Enrollment: 520
Address: 3311 NE 60th Street	Nickname: Dragons
Configuration: K-5	



Yesler, ca. 1893 MOHAI 5568

The first school established in the Ravenna neighborhood was a one-room log cabin located on the 160-acre homestead of Robert W. Weedon, at what is now 25th Avenue NE and NE 56th Street. Weedon School, opened by District No. 25 in 1879, served all children in the four-mile area north of Lake Union between Lake Washington and the crest of Phinney Ridge. When Weedon School closed in 1889, classes were relocated to a private house halfway between Weedon School and Green Lake. The original Weedon cabin became a private residence and was destroyed by fire in 1895.

In 1891, an area from Lake Union northward, including Green Lake, was annexed into the City of Seattle. The Seattle School District established a school at Green Lake (see Green Lake School), while a school for the eastern half of old School District No. 25 was temporarily located in a church on Yesler Street. The surrounding community had grown up around Henry Yesler's sawmill on the north shore of Union Bay. In 1892, a Yesler schoolhouse was opened by Yesler School District No. 77, just south of Calvary Cemetery. Some of the children were unhappy having to walk through a cemetery to get to school. After the addition of a second room in 1910

Details:

Name: **Yesler School**
Location: (N)E 47th Street &
34th Avenue NE
Building: 1-room wood
Architect: John Parkinson
Site: 0.92 acres

1892: Opened May 29 by
Yesler School District
1910-11: Addition (n.a.)
1911: Annexed into Seattle
School District
1918: Closed in December
1924-29: Site sold

Details:

Name: **William Cullen Bryant School**
Location: (N)E 57th Street &
33rd Avenue NE
Building: 6-room, wood “Liberty
Building”
Architect: Floyd A. Naramore
Site: 2.0 acres

1918: Named on November 7
1919: Opened in early January
1925: Site expanded to 3.3
acres by June 30
1926: Closed
1927: Demolished

or 1911, boys were taught in one room by a male teacher and girls in the other by a female teacher.

After annexation of the area to Seattle, land for a new, larger school was purchased in 1918. During the planning and building stages, the new school was called the Ravenna-Yesler or the Yesler-Ravenna School. This first Bryant School was built in a quiet area of small farms and woodlands near the future site of University Village shopping center. It opened in 1919 after Christmas recess on what is now the southwest corner of the playfield. It was one of five “Liberty Buildings” erected by the Seattle School District during World War I. Because of the conflicting pressures of a growing population and the national policy to conserve materials and labor for the war effort, these six-room wooden buildings were inexpensive, quickly built, and lacked indoor plumbing.

The school was named for William Cullen Bryant, a nineteenth century poet and journalist. Sparse and designed for temporary use, the new school was still a significant improvement over the two-room Yesler School the students and teachers had previously occupied. According to the recollections of Madeline Chittenden, one of the first teachers at Bryant, “There was no heating plant, so each room had a big stove ... There was no basement and no play facilities, so the long hall was used for play on rainy days. This kept all of us on duty during recess and noon to supervise the children while they played in the hall—the noise was terrible. Our rooms were crowded. The first grade ... had sixty-eight students ... There was only a one-room school at Laurelhurst, so many of the children there came to Bryant.” Boys at the school cut Christmas trees east of 35th Street. At lunchtime, they went down (N)E 57th and ate apples from an orchard.

By September 1923, Bryant had eight portables, supplementing the six-room building to accommodate enrollment that had increased 160 percent since 1918-19. Originally, grades 1-6 attended this school, then it expanded to include grades 7 and 8. In 1925, in preparation for the construction of a larger Bryant school, the district

purchased two lots, including the former Ravenna Methodist Protestant Church, in order “to complete the Bryant school site.” Construction of a new brick building in twentieth century Georgian style was completed between February and August 1926. Like other schools constructed by the district during the 1920s, Bryant incorporated many features that were then new to school design, including combined assembly-lunchrooms; covered, open-air play courts; and specialized staff rooms and offices.

The new building was the first elementary school in the district to be constructed especially for the semi-departmental or platoon organization with a library, art room, gym, music room, and sewing/cooking room. Those students and teachers who had tolerated the old wooden building’s outhouses for many years, found the new indoor plumbing the ultimate in modern convenience.

Kindergarten was added in 1930-31, filling the school beyond its capacity of 800 pupils. Meanwhile, the area population continued to boom. Most of the homes now standing around the school and south of NE 65th Street

were built in the 1920s. In 1931, an east wing was added with eight classrooms, two library rooms, a science room, an art room, and a larger gymnasium. Throughout the 1930s, Bryant's enrollment stayed steady between 900 and 1,000 pupils in grades K-8.

During the early years of World War II, housing sprang up north of NE 65th Street as workers flooded into Seattle to work at Boeing, the Naval Station at Sand Point, and other war-related jobs. By 1944, Bryant's enrollment had swelled to 1,349 students, and there were seven portable classrooms.

After the war, the neighborhood continued to grow. Enrollment topped 1,400 twice, in 1948-49 and again in 1952-53. Enrollment dropped back down to 1,200 when the school became K-6 during the 1950-51 school year, and the upper classes transferred to the new Eckstein Junior High School. By 1952-53, enrollment was back over 1,400. The opening of Wedgwood School in 1953 and Sand Point School in 1956 helped relieve the crowded conditions at Bryant. By 1959, the student population was down to around 900, where it remained through much of the 1960s.

In 1971, Bryant was paired with T. T. Minor to establish voluntary exchanges as part of the district's desegregation plan. That fall Bryant became a K-5 school, with 6th graders assigned to Eckstein Middle School. By fall 1972, enrollment had dropped to around 500, and Bryant became an "exemplary basic skills center" and a

Details:

Name: **William Cullen Bryant School**

Location: 3311 (N)E 60th Street

Building: 14-room brick

Architect: Floyd A. Naramore

Site: 3.3 acres

1926: Opened

1931: Addition (Naramore)

1998: Exteriors (1920 and 1932 buildings) and play courts designated City of Seattle landmark on July 1

2001: Addition and Renovation (BLRB; BEX I)



Bryant, ca. 1930 SPSA 209-3



Bryant, 1960 SPSA 209-25

“language learning disability” center for north-end schools. Under the desegregation plan of 1978, it became a K-2 school, with the 3rd-5th graders attending T. T. Minor.

In 1989, along with other Seattle public elementary schools, Bryant returned to a K-5 program. Its pioneering elementary science program was used throughout the Seattle School District. As a “World Culture” center, Bryant also offered an Asian Cultures class that studied art and world trade.

Bryant closed for a year in June 2000 to be thoroughly remodeled and made ready for the needs of the twenty-first century. Students were housed at Lincoln from September 2000 to June 2001 during construction.

Architects Burr Lawrence Rising and Bates prepared the plans for the \$15.1 million renovation of the building plus the construction of an addition filling approximately 14,000 square feet of space within the existing building’s U-shape plan. McKinley Construction completed the project in August 2001, increasing the capacity of Bryant to 535. The renovation and addition featured larger classrooms equipped with computers and a new library, gym, and lunchroom.

Bryant continued to have success with its volunteer-driven math and science programs. By the fall of 2008, enrollment exceeded the increased capacity for the first time with 546 students enrolled and 74 families on the waiting list. Enrollment continued to increase each year, peaking at 594 in 2013 and returning to within capacity at 520 in 2020 after the district opened an additional school in its northeast cluster (see Thornton Creek).