

# Cleveland

Name: Grover Cleveland STEM High School	Enrollment: 921
Address: 5511 15th Avenue S	Nickname: Eagles
Configuration: 9-12	Colors: Red and white
Newspaper: <i>Cleveland Journal</i>	Annual: <i>Aquila</i>



Cleveland, 2022 ©Arthur Ross SPSA 012-291

The roots of Cleveland High School can be traced to the early Georgetown High School, which began in a Georgetown church building as an annex to Mueller School from September 1903 to June 1904 (see Georgetown). The following year, the high school operated on the top floor of Mueller School. The class of 1905 was the only class to graduate from Georgetown High School. In fall 1905, the Georgetown School District gave high school students streetcar fare to attend West Seattle High School. After the City of Georgetown was annexed into Seattle in 1910, south-end high school students went to Queen Anne, Broadway, and Franklin. At the time, it was felt that the south end would not grow sufficiently to warrant building a new high school.

South-end residents continued to ask for their own high school. In 1918, residents petitioned the school board for a new high school for students finishing at Van Asselt, South Park, Concord, South Seattle, South Beacon Hill, and Georgetown. By 1923, the district was also considering a new intermediate school at the site of Georgetown, Maple, or a new site.

A new secondary program was launched in September 1923 at the Georgetown School with 7th and 8th grades from South Seattle and Maple. The next fall, 82 students who had just completed the 8th grade at Concord



Cleveland, 1927 SPSA 012-3

and Van Asselt were added at Georgetown, which was called Georgetown High School. However, the secondary school programs at Georgetown were short-lived.

A new school was built in two phases with the west wing completed in December 1926 and the final east wing, containing the gymnasium, completed a year later. The school was built in the twentieth century Georgian style on a steeply sloped site on a ridge, overlooking the flatlands of Georgetown. The property was graded into two terraces. To this day, the lower field contains the playfield, and the upper terrace is the location for the school. The school is the last of three high schools designed by Floyd Naramore, along with Roosevelt and Garfield.

In accordance with a general policy to name schools after famous Americans, the name of the new school, along with the existing program, was changed to Grover Cleveland High School, in honor of the nation's 22nd and 24th President. At the recommendation of Superintendent Thomas G. Cole, the board decided to make Cleveland a six-year intermediate-senior high school, the first in the city.

The transfer to the new site occurred in the middle of the 1926-27 school year as older pupils carried their books from Georgetown School, marched over the Lucile Street Bridge, and up the hill in a parade to the new building. The first graduation was held that spring, with 52 students receiving diplomas.

Cleveland maintained a separate junior and high school, each with a different organization but sharing the same principal and vice principal. The programs were Cleveland High School and Grover Cleveland Intermediate School from 1926-27 through 1927-28. The latter became Grover Cleveland Junior High School.

## Details:

Name: **Grover Cleveland High School**  
 Location: 5511 15th Avenue S  
 Building: 18-room brick  
 Architect: Floyd A. Naramore  
 Site: 5.1 acres

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1925: Named on July 24  
 1927: Opened on January 3  
 1931: 1.02-acre playfield acquired  
 1944: Site expanded to 7.3 acres  
 1958: Addition (J. W. Maloney)  
 1967: Site expanded to 8.6 acres  
 1970: Addition (Edward Mahlum)  
 1981: 1927 exterior designated City of Seattle landmark on June 17  
 2005: School closed for construction; Students relocated to Boren as an interim site  
 2007: School reopened September 5; Renovation and addition (Mahlum Architects; BEX II)  
 2010: Name changed to Cleveland STEM High School; Became an Option school  
 2018: Track and field upgraded (BEX IV and BTA IV)





Cleveland, ca. 1940 SPSA 012-16

Traditions took shape in the early years of the high school. The nickname Eagles was chosen in 1929, replacing the previous name Highlanders. In 1933, a contest for naming the annual was held. The winning suggestion, submitted by a member of the senior class, was Aquila, the Latin word for eagle. The annual Cleveland Day was held on March 17, the former president's birthday. Ray Imus came to Cleveland as a history teacher in 1929 and a year later became vice principal. "Mr. Cleveland," as he came to be called, served the school until his retirement in 1964.

At a time when the school was searching for ways to honor former students who died in World War II, Principal Kenneth Selby (1940-45) suggested a living memorial. Using \$344 contributed by the Class of 1943, 131 acres of land on the Issaquah-Fall City Road east of Issaquah were purchased. This land was named the Cleveland Memorial Forest and was dedicated to the 29 Cleveland graduates who lost their lives in the war (see Cleveland High School Memorial Forest). During the 1940s, when wartime workers built planes at the nearby Boeing Company plant, enrollment increased by over 200 students, reaching 1,241 in 1945-46.

An extensive history project involving Cleveland students was undertaken in 1949. The resulting publication, *The Duwamish Diary*, describes the development of schools in south Seattle. It refers to Cleveland as a symbol of progress because a high school had for so long been the dream of residents in this part of the city.

In fall 1957, the 7th and 8th grades were transferred to the new Asa Mercer Junior High School. This left Cleveland for the first time as a four-year high school. In 1958, a new wing was added to the north side of the school. It contained a metal shop, art room, and band and choir rooms. The school was enlarged again in 1970 when a new gymnasium and administrative rooms were added to the facility.

In 1979, when the school board was considering closing Cleveland, students gave Ray Imus a standing ovation when he came to a board meeting to speak against closure.

In the early 2000s, Cleveland remained the smallest comprehensive high school in the district. The City of Seattle gave the school funds for a new rose and vegetable garden, and a new aquaculture building was donated to the school so students could raise and sell fish, a program called “Fish and Roses.” This experimental program did not meet with success and the features were not incorporated into the new construction in 2007.

In 2000, Cleveland had a capacity of 783 students, and the 1999 Facilities Master Plan called for an expanded capacity to 1,000 students. Because of the landmark status established in 1981, construction needed to be a combination of modernization, historic renovation, and new construction. A summer 2001 building management plan selected an option that demolished part of the 1927 historic building and retained other parts through historic renovation to keep the significant facades but with modernized interiors. The design included new construction that replaced the demolished portions, including a gym/commons building and a new three-story classroom building. The design phase began in November 2002 and construction started in June 2005. During the renovation, Cleveland students were housed at Boren as their interim site.

In 2003, under a Gates Foundation grant, the district “separated” Cleveland into four small academies—the Infotech Academy, which had started up in a small way in 2000 before the grant; the Arts and Humanities Academy; the Health, Environment and Life Academy (HEAL); and the Global Studies Academy. The new school was designed by Mahlum Architects to follow the small-schools model and to accommodate these four distinct theme-based academies.

Among the new features inside the restored landmark were a new campus entry and floor-to-ceiling windows that flanked the shiny new science classrooms that allowed light to stream through old-fashioned windows into a high-ceilinged gymnasium-turned-band-room. Students returned to the school for the start of the 2007 school year.

By 2009, only two of the four academies remained, the cost of supporting the small school model was high, enrollment had not increased, and the change in programming had not improved overall academic achievement. In September 2010, another attempt was made to improve Cleveland. The school became an option high school, changed its name to Cleveland STEM High School, and modified its programming to offer two different learning pathways, the School of Life Sciences (SOLS) and the School of Engineering & Design (SOED). SOLS focuses on biomedical life sciences including biology, anatomy, physiology, and industry-standard laboratory procedures. SOED focuses on computer sciences, engineering, and technology. The Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) program at Cleveland was revamped to focus on college and career areas where employment is expected to grow.

Each of the Cleveland STEM pathways enrolled up to 125 students per grade level. Partners in the project-based learning at Cleveland included Boeing, Google, Microsoft, University of Washington Public Health, and the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. Enrollment at the school increased and remained steady, with over 800 students, and academic achievement improved.



Cleveland, 1960 SPSA 012-17



Cleveland, 2022 ©Arthur Ross SPSA 012-292

In 2018, the track and field at Cleveland were renovated in a three-month joint project with the Seattle Parks Department under a term interlocal cooperative agreement. The existing natural turf field was replaced with synthetic turf and a three-lane rubberized running track was installed. Associated track and field venues like shot put, long jump, high jump, triple jump, and pole vault were included in the project. The tennis courts were resurfaced and batting cages were installed.

Famous alumni of Cleveland include NBA basketball players and SPS Athletic Hall of Fame inductees Jawann Oldham (1976) and Carl Ervin (1976).