

Introduction

Seattle is a city rich with neighborhoods. Concurrent with the development of those neighborhoods was the development of neighborhood schools. This book presents a brief history of each school that has operated within the Seattle School District since it began in 1862, seven years before the city was incorporated.

Background

The present volume constitutes the fifth in a series of publications produced by the Seattle School District. The four preceding works are:

- 1951 *Histories of the Seattle Public Schools*. Edited by Kenneth E. Selby.
- 1961 *Histories of the Seattle Public Schools, 1961*. Edited by Kenneth E. Selby.
- 1974 *Seattle School Histories, 1869-1974*. Edited by Sara Levant.
- 2002 *Building for Learning, Seattle Public School Histories, 1862-2000*. Written by Nile Thompson and Carolyn J. Marr.

The idea of having a history of schools in the Seattle School District originated in 1946 with Assistant Superintendent Kenneth E. Selby. He envisioned that one class at each school would develop a report that discussed not only the origin and growth of that school but also the background of the neighborhood. The following year, when some schools had not responded to his request and some reports were too brief or inadequate, Superintendent Samuel E. Fleming reissued the request to all principals.

What Selby received were several essays, “most of them [were] written by pupils or committees of pupils but [a number were written] by teachers, principals, or pioneer residents in the community.” Selby took these school histories and used them as the basis for the 1951 work. He edited the essays “to eliminate extra-

neous material and to secure brevity and a semblance of unity.”

Additionally, he wrote several short essays about some of the many schools that were no longer in use. A total of 104 histories were presented, 88 for open schools and 16 for closed schools.

Selby did not see this as a one-time effort. Once the project was completed, he set a goal of having the volume updated every 10 years, thereby not only catching up on recent history but also adding new schools.

In 1961 Selby compiled the second version. He notes the following differences from the earlier volume:

The histories of eighteen schools which have been closed prior to 1951 have not been included in this volume. On the other hand the names of thirty-three schools, either built or annexed in the last ten years, have been added. The purchase by the school district of an offset duplicating machine has made possible the inclusion of photographs of all school buildings and some very interesting pictures of early units.

Although the 1951 volume is arranged strictly by alphabetical order, the 1961 work placed the schools first in hierarchical sets: technical school, high schools, junior high schools, and then elementary schools. The emphasis of the newer work is open schools, with 114 histories for those schools and just four for schools that had closed between 1957 and 1961.

The 1974 volume returned to alphabetical order with two exceptions. After 116 “histories of individual Seattle schools now in use” came a brief discussion of each of four former buildings that were no longer schools but were still owned by the district, along with a history of Broadway High School, no longer open nor owned by the district. However, this version mislabels schools by standardizing the names to the buildings. While John B. Allen School, Daniel Bagley School, and James A. Garfield High School are the names officially given by the school board, there never

has been, as the headings falsely portray, a Captain William Ballard High School or a John Greenleaf Whittier Elementary School.

Rather than just updating earlier histories, the 2000 version provided newly written histories for the schools with an emphasis on those that operated after 1945. An effort was made to correct mistakes made in previous editions by scouring the district archives and searching through school board minutes, newspapers, and other records. As an aid to readers, an index was included.

The Present Volume

This volume is an updated version of the 2002 edition of *Building for Learning*, which used the earlier edition as a baseline for the chapters in this book. As with the earlier works, this volume does not presume to provide a complete history of any one school, nor a listing of principals, famous students, or alumni groups. In addition, the writers concentrated their efforts on updating the chapters on the physical buildings, not programmatic or academic details, though that information is covered in part. Naturally, schools which operated longer or had multiple buildings had more information available, resulting in longer histories.

The cutoff date for including information was August 31, 2022. That said, many 2023 projects are included, and future or incomplete projects are noted if these projects have secured funding. The anticipated dates of those projects are shown within brackets.

How to Use this Volume

The present volume is organized alphabetically by the current name of the school building. Where a currently closed school had two or more names, factors such as duration (for example, the length of time the name was used), student body size (if one name was used for a full school and the other for a small, specialized school) and relative sequence (which name was used last) were considered. There are many cases where the name of the school program does not align with the name of the school building, i.e., Rising Star at African American Academy. Because school names can change

over time and the names of programs may not be presented in the title of the school history, the reader is urged to consult the index if the name of a particular school does not appear in the alphabetical listing of school histories.

In cases where the school is named after an individual, the order is based on the surname. First names are listed when there is more than one school with the same surname. Roman numerals were used to differentiate an earlier school and a more recent school, such as for two schools that were both named Central.

In a number of cases, discussions of more than one school are treated in a single listing. Temporary schools that evolved into permanent schools are always included under the latter. Also combined are: 1) schools built on the same site, even after a number of intervening years, unless the original school was relocated elsewhere, 2) original and replacement schools located a short distance apart, even if the names differed, and 3) merged schools where one existed for only a short time as part of the Seattle School District. These combinations were made to capture relationships perceived by educators, students, and the community. Alternative schools and special programs are treated in the histories of the schools that housed them.

For information on the earliest schools, those used before the district opened its first constructed school-house, please refer to the histories of University and Central I. Two valuable sources for information on early schools are:

Angie Burt Bowden, *Early Schools of Washington Territory* (Seattle: Lowman and Hanford Company, 1935).

Gilbert S. Costello, *Notebook: Chronological History of Seattle Schools, 1865-1881* (Seattle Public Library).

A historical overview of the Seattle School District, which follows this introduction, provides general information that may help readers to understand the individual histories more fully and to place them within a larger context.

Each of the currently operating schools begins with an information block that contains the name, enroll-

ment, nickname, school colors, and name of student newspaper and annual, if relevant. This information is for the school year 2020-21, unless otherwise noted.

Within a history, most buildings include a sidebar containing information relevant to when the school opened: name, address, construction type, architect, and site size. If information is not available, the abbreviation “n.a.” is used. Each sidebar includes a short timeline of key events in each school’s history, such as information about the opening, renaming, annexation, building updates (i.e., seismic improvement), and closing date, disposition of the building, and site if no longer a school. In the 2022 edition, efforts were made to more closely follow program movement and funding sources for the past 20 years.

Each history has at least one photo. The photos include a caption that documents the name of the site, the date the picture was captured and the image identification information (i.e. source of the image and the image number). Most of the images are provided by the Seattle Public Schools Records and Archives Department (SPSA).

Appendix One is a chronology of the opening date of each permanent school building in the district’s history. Appendix Two is a map of current Seattle School District facilities and sites. Appendix Three is an annotated list of Seattle School District superintendents from 1867-2022.