

King, Jr. (formerly Brighton)

Name: Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School	Enrollment: 308
Address: 6725 45th Avenue S	Nickname: Dream Catcher
Configuration: K-5	Colors: Navy blue and white



King, Jr., 2023 © Arthur Ross SPSA 207-51

Settler Everett Smith platted 40 acres along the shores of Lake Washington in 1890 and named the area Brighton Beach after a popular English seaside resort south of London. Smith and other landowners helped build an electric railway to connect their settlement with Seattle. This railway ran down what later became Rainier Avenue.

The first building to be named Brighton School was built in 1901 at 51st and Graham Streets, near the top of Graham Hill (see Graham Hill). The first school in Brighton Beach was a temporary facility in the basement of a church. It opened in fall 1903 as an annex to Columbia School. This one-room structure closed when a new Brighton School opened in 1904 or 1905 on Holly Street at the site of the present school. The new Brighton was surrounded by a wooden fence used to keep out the cows that roamed the area. In August 1906, the board of Columbia School District No. 18 voted to discontinue high school classes at Brighton and to pay tuition for those students to attend Seattle High School.

The older building on Graham Street, then called Brighton Beach, was used as an annex from fall 1907 until early 1909 when a second story was added at the Brighton School on Holly Street. The expanded building had a total of eight classrooms.

Shortly after World War I, from 1918 to 1922, the Graham Street building, by then called Brighton Annex, housed an overflow of students. In 1922, in response to high enrollment numbers, a separate one-story brick

Details:

Name: **Brighton School**
Location: 4425 S Holly Street
Building: 1-room, 2-story wood
Architect: James Stephen
Site: 1.9 acres

1904 or 1905:

Opened by Columbia School District

1907: Annexed into Seattle School District

1909: Second story addition (James Stephen)

1917: Site expanded to 3.77 acres

1945: Destroyed by fire, wrecked



Brighton, 1904 Rainier Valley Historical Society 94.05.01

structure was constructed behind the main Brighton School building. The new building contained six classrooms and an auditorium/lunchroom. The enlarged Brighton School had an enrollment of 440 students in grades 1-8.

After World War II, Brighton was again crowded. During 1945-46, the 6th and 7th grades were sent to two vacant rooms at Whitworth. On the evening of September 22, 1945, an arson fire swept through the frame portion of the 1904 Brighton School building, destroying the structure. Almost 300 students were left without classrooms and were placed in portables or sent to neighboring schools until September 9, 1949, when newly renovated and expanded Brighton opened its doors.

The construction project to replace the burned 1904 building and to create a single, larger Brighton school building entailed remodeling the existing 1922 building and constructing three additions. On opening day, construction workers raced to complete their work, maneuvering wheelbarrows of mortar around groups of children. The confusion soon settled down, and Brighton staff and students enjoyed their new school equipped with modern blonde furniture, inlaid linoleum, and a sink in every room.



Brighton, ca. 1940 SPSA 207-6

Enrollment reached 715 in 1952-53, and an addition of eight classrooms was necessary. The 1953 addition provided a new classroom at both the east and west end of the south side of the building and a major addition to the west wing on the north side of the building. When completed, the Brighton School was a mix of architectural styles, and distinctive visual characteristics of the original 1922 Georgian style building were no longer visible.

The post-war boom continued until 1956-57, when Brighton's enrollment reached 1,032. The following year the Graham Street site held portables and was called East Brighton. The opening of Graham Hill School on that site in 1961 reduced Brighton's enrollment to less than 800.

In 1971, Wing Luke and Dearborn Park opened nearby, and Brighton's enrollment further decreased to 490. In 1972, Brighton was designated a basic-skills center where programs would be developed on a demonstration basis. One of these programs brought students from throughout Rainier Valley for instruction aimed at overcoming language-learning disabilities.

In September 1978, Brighton formed a triad relationship with West Queen Anne and Hay for the purpose of desegregation. A total of 35 students participated that first year and, in 1980, more than half of the students at Brighton came by bus from the two Queen Anne school areas.

Brighton underwent a facelift in 1989-90. A new fence enclosure was installed to circle the playground areas. With assistance from a City of Seattle grant, the PTA installed new play equipment, and a garden and benches were added to the grounds.

Details:

Name: **Brighton School**
 Location: 4425 S Holly Street
 Building: 7-room, 1-story brick
 Architect: n.a.
 Site: 1.9 acres

1922: Opened
 1949: Remodel/addition (Young & Richardson), joined to 1922 building to form a single building
 1953: Addition (J. Lister Holmes, McClure, Adkinson & MacDonald)
 2003: School closed for construction and demolished; Students relocated to E.C. Hughes as interim site



Brighton, 1960 SPSA 207-9

Details:

Name: **Brighton Elementary School**
Location: 6725 45th Avenue S
Building: 22-room
Architect: Burr Lawrence Rising + Bates
Site: 1.9 acres

2004: New school opened (BEX II)
2010: Renamed Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School

In 2000, the district studied a proposal to expand Brighton to accommodate 200 more students. However, instead of preserving and expanding on the existing school, it was determined that a replacement school was preferred. The Landmarks Board agreed with that assessment, since the various structures that made up Brighton were not distinctive representatives of modern architectural design, and the Landmark nomination was rejected. As a result, in 2001, the capital levy included funds for a project to construct a larger replacement school building for Brighton.

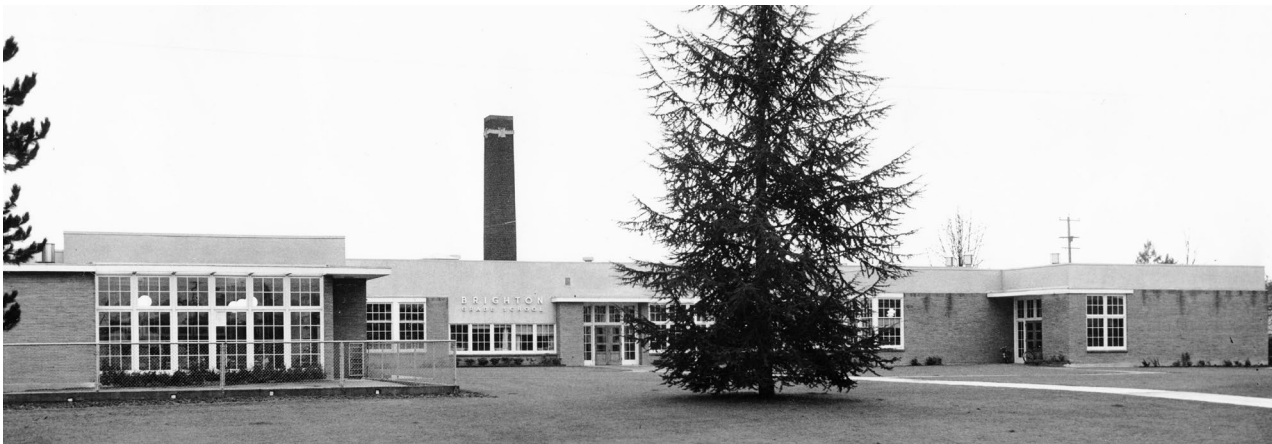
Construction began in the summer of 2003, but it came with a catch as no nearby school building was available during construction.

Brighton students were relocated approximately 30 minutes away to the Hughes building in West Seattle as their interim site. Enrollment declined to fewer than 100 students during the 2002-03 school year, and three teachers were laid off. When the new Brighton opened in September 2004 with a gala celebration, enrollment jumped back up to 240. Superintendent Raj Manhas welcomed students back with a quip, “It’s the children who brighten the building.”

The new building, more than 40 percent larger than the old one, increased capacity from 325 students to 445, increased gross square feet from 39,172 to 66,475 and allowed for expansion of Brighton’s preschool program. The new school also provided a community space where local residents could gather for adult education programs and meetings. In 2005, the school won an Outstanding Design award from American School & University magazine. A large, prominent Atlas Cedar tree located on the front lawn at the north side of the building was preserved. Planted sometime during the 1920s or 1930s, the tree was about 80 feet tall in 2002 and stood out as a local landmark from several blocks away.

In 2006, the district closed the first Martin Luther King Elementary (see King (formerly Harrison)) in Madison Valley and dispersed its students to T. T. Minor and other area schools. In 2010, still eager to have a school named for the late civil rights leader, the district renamed Brighton as Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School at a May 19, 2010, school board meeting. Four hundred people attended the naming ceremony.

Students at King participate in the America SCORES program. The program combines competitive soccer, poetry writing, and service learning. King is one of several schools that partner with “City Year,” an organization that provides AmeriCorps volunteers for additional academic support in each of their 3rd through 5th grade classrooms. The organization works with students in small group settings.



Brighton, ca. 1950 SPSA 207-7