

Madison

Name: James Madison Middle School	Enrollment: 1,023
Address: 3429 45th Avenue SW	Nickname: Bulldogs
Configuration: 6-8	Colors: Blue and yellow



Madison, ca. 1940 SPSA 107-1

In the late 1920s, the Seattle School District decided that an intermediate school was needed to relieve overcrowding in the elementary schools of West Seattle. Land was purchased in 1927 and the new building opened in 1929.

During the planning stage, the school was called West Seattle Intermediate School. In February 1928, it was officially named James Madison Intermediate School for the fourth president of the United States. When it opened in 1929, the school was called James Madison Junior High School.

The building was designed for a capacity of 1,300 students, with the option to expand to house 1,750 with additions. The floor plan was similar to that of the other three intermediate schools constructed during this period, but Madison's architectural details were unique. Madison is the only school building with three-story brick 20th Century Gothic stylistic features designed by the district's third architect, Floyd Naramore. The building features buttresses with cast stone caps, pointed-arched entries, and label molding on some windows.

The initial student body consisted of 7th and 8th graders from Alki, Gatewood, Fauntleroy, Jefferson, and Lafayette. Ninth graders were added the next year, bringing enrollment to 1,212. In September 1931, an addition to the north end of the building opened with four more classrooms, a study hall, and a conference room. This 'pavilion' addition had a projecting central bay with a stepped cornice above the second-floor windows and brick buttresses.

The school paper, the *Madisonian* (1930-51), first appeared as a Christmas gift to all pupils. A Japanese cherry tree, planted in the northeast corner of the lawn in front of the building, was dedicated on February 18, 1932, to commemorate the 200th anniversary of George Washington's birth.

Students from Hughes joined Madison in September 1938. During the 1938-39 school year Inez Stark's art classes painted four murals. Two in the library depict the activities of students at the school. Another on one wall of the study hall focuses on the "Four Freedoms" and was inspired by the Atlantic Charter. The fourth, on the opposite wall, depicts the industries of the Pacific Northwest.

Details:

Name: **James Madison Junior High School**

Location: 3429 45th Avenue SW

Building: 3-story brick

Architect: Floyd A. Naramore

Site: 7.92 acres

1928: Named on February 10

1929: Opened September 3

1931: Addition opened in September (Naramore)

1972: Addition (Grant, Copeland, Chervenak & Assoc.)

1989: Became James Madison Middle School

2002: Designated a City of Seattle landmark

2004: Seismic improvements

2005: Renovation and addition (Bassetti Architects; BEX II)

2022: Addition (Studio Meng Strazzara; BEX V and State of Washington Distressed Schools Grant)

[2023]: Field improvements (BEX V)

Madison sponsored several annual events in the late 1940s. A Christmas tree contributed by the Boys' Club was trimmed by the Girls' Club. At Christmas time, students caroled in the halls and held an inspirational program in the assembly room. A spring concert took place when lilacs bloomed, and girls "come forth in their long dresses and the boys don their best white shirts." In the mid-1960s there was still a Christmas assembly and a spring concert that were so popular that all 1,000 tickets for both performances sold out in just three days.

The school's first principal, J. W. Scudder, held that position until 1956. By 1961, rising elementary students from Schmitz Park, Fairmount Park, Genesee Hill, and Cooper also came to Madison, and enrollment stood at 1,650. However, by 1973, Cooper students shifted to Boren and enrollment dropped to approximately 1,400. In 1972, a new gymnasium opened with a weight room and gymnastic equipment. From September 1982 through June 1989, Madison housed only 7th and 8th graders.

In 1992, Madison became one of only three middle schools in the United States to participate in Stanford University's innovative Accelerated Schools Project. This project aimed to do away with labels such as "gifted" and "remedial" and challenge all students equally.

In June 1993, students from the metal and wood shop class won the statewide Solar Vehicle Competition with the boats they constructed during and after school. Madison received the 1997 Governor's Award for the state's best middle school drug and alcohol prevention program. A series of student-support projects, including an auction, which raised \$23,000 annually, stemmed from a seven-year partnership with Nordstrom.

In 2002, the school was designated a City of Seattle Landmark. In 2005, a BEX II Capital Levy provided funds for the historic renovation and the construction of an eight-classroom addition. Bassetti Architects served as project architects and the scope of work included installation of a geothermal system, the first geothermal project in the district to provide heat and cooling for an entire building. The 250 wells were constructed 150 feet below the sports field.

In 2022, a new 12,500-square-foot, two-story addition on the north side of the school was completed and included six new general classrooms, two new science classrooms, and learning support spaces. Funded by BEX V and a State of Washington Distressed Schools grant, the addition was designed by Studio Meng Strazzara and the work was performed while the school remained open.

Hallways in the new addition feature 'learning seats,' where students can sit down in the hallway to do work. The walls in common spaces are covered with corkboard and similar surfaces to facilitate tacking things up. The Madison mascot, the Bulldog, is featured in one stairwell fashioned from ApplePly, a premium type of plywood. One existing classroom had to be reoriented—now narrower but longer—to facilitate hallway space tying together the addition to the older building.

A project to improve the field was scheduled for summer 2023, which included the construction of a synthetic turf, multipurpose sports field and the installation of six light poles to help minimize sky glow.