

McGilvra

Name: McGilvra Elementary School	Enrollment: 226
Address: 1617 38th Avenue E	Nickname: Wildcats
Configuration: K-5	Colors: Red and white



McGilvra, ca. 1960 SPSA 248-4

The area now known as Madison Park was originally developed by John J. McGilvra, who purchased 420 acres in 1864 and built his home there. McGilvra, for whom the permanent school would be named, had served for three years as U.S. Attorney for Washington Territory, an appointment made by President Abraham Lincoln. The two lawyers had worked in adjoining offices in Illinois. Tired of the continual travel required in his government post, McGilvra picked the acreage bordering Lake Washington on which to settle. In order to connect his residence, known as Laurel Shade, with the village of Seattle, McGilvra built a rough wagon road parallel to what is Madison Street today. In 1891, the Madison Street Cable Railway opened, and McGilvra encouraged its extension by donating 21 acres for a terminal and recreation area, which became Madison Park.

The many new settlers attracted to McGilvra's neighborhood needed a place for their children to attend school. On December 2, 1891, the Seattle School Board authorized purchase of property in McGilvra's Second Addition, which McGilvra had platted along with several other real

Details:

Name: **Lake School**
 Location: 38th Avenue E and E Garfield
 Building: 2-room wood
 Architect: W. E. Boone
 Site: 2.4 acres

1899: Opened
 1902: Became an annex to Longfellow
 1911: Third classroom added
 1913: Closed
 1915: Demolished

Details:

Name: **Lake School**
Location: 1617 38th Avenue E
Building: 9-classroom brick
Architect: Edgar Blair
Site: 2.15 acres

1913: Opened as an annex to Longfellow
1914: Renamed J. J. McGilvra School on April 25
1918: No longer an annex
1940: Addition (Naramore & Brady)
1972: Addition (Huggard & Associates)
2014: Designated city landmark
2018: Seismic updates; Classroom reconfiguration and new lunchroom (Integrus Architects; BEX IV & BTA III)

estate additions. Construction of the two-room, wood pavilion did not begin until July 1899. Lake School opened with between 50 and 60 pupils and one head teacher. A third classroom was added to the initial two in 1911, but within a few years, the small building was too crowded. The lower grades were taught in two sessions, with the second group attending class from noon until 4 p.m. In the winter months, these students were dismissed at 3 p.m. because their parents worried about them walking home through the woods after dark.

When the Longfellow School (see Meany) opened in 1902, Lake School became an annex under Longfellow's new principal, Annie Gifford, who had been a teacher at the Lake School. Eva M. Dansingburg, the head teacher at Lake, later became principal of McGilvra, a position she held from 1918 until 1933.

In 1913, a new brick building was constructed on the same site to accommodate the expanding needs of the neighborhood. The architecture is similar to Concord and McDonald, and all three were constructed to meet the district's new standards of fire safety. The utilitarian design represents a shift away from the more elaborately decorated schools built a few years earlier.

In its inaugural year, the Lake School housed approximately 150 pupils in grades 1-7. The name of the school was changed in 1914 to honor J. J. McGilvra. The school did not grow immediately. It wasn't until 1915-16 that a fifth classroom opened. McGilvra remained under the supervision of Longfellow's principal until 1918, when enrollment reached 246, and six classrooms were in use.



McGilvra, 1960 SPSA 248-1

In 1940, an addition was constructed to accommodate the nearly 400 students attending McGilvra. The single-story brick wing added four classrooms on the north side of the building. The largest enrollment recorded was 511 students in 1952-53. Subsequently, enrollment declined to 400, and then into the 300s by the mid-1960s.

Beginning in 1970, McGilvra housed grades 1-4 as part of the Central Area's 4-4-4 plan in which elementary, middle, and high schools each comprised four grades.

In 1972, a new gymnasium, considered the most modern in the district, was constructed to the rear of the main building. A Learning Resources Center was created the same year by removing the walls between three classrooms and part of the hallway. The auditorium became a kindergarten, with the stage left intact for performances. During the desegregation plan of the late 1970s and the 1980s, McGilvra remained K-5.

An after-school tutoring program began in 1990 to assist children with their reading skills. Other programs included special education and English as a Second Language classes. The curriculum focused on basic skills in language development and math, along with an extensive arts program. In 1999, McGilvra celebrated the 100th anniversary of the school site. An architectural drawing of the Lake School outhouse was framed and hung in the library.

In the first two decades of the twenty-first century, McGilvra received a host of physical upgrades. They included elevator improvements in 2000 and a new sports field on the north portion of the property in 2003 as part of a 'field of dreams' grant project. In 2018, two classrooms were reconfigured, and a new kitchen and student lunchroom were constructed with funding from BEX IV and BTA III. Perhaps most important for the future of the school, on October 15, 2014, the City of Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve McGilvra as a Seattle landmark.

In 2000, parents in the affluent Madison Valley and Madison Park neighborhoods raised money to install two portables at McGilvra, allowing for smaller class sizes, and more funds each year to pay for one part-time and three full-time teachers. In return, Seattle Public Schools agreed to keep class sizes low for the next 20 years. The district cancelled the contract in 2011 when it became apparent that McGilvra needed to absorb more students from overcrowded schools elsewhere in the district. However, the PTA continued to grant funds for an academic and social emotional intervention support program at the school for a number of years.



McGilvra, 2000 ©Mary Randlett SPSA 248-6