

## Rainier View

Name: Rainier View Elementary School	Enrollment: 241
Address: 11650 Beacon Avenue S	Nickname: Tigers
Configuration: K-5	Colors: Red and White



Rainier View, ca. 1973 SPSA 264-4

In 1951, a committee from the Rainier Valley Community Club asked the Seattle Parks Department to install a playfield in the southeast Beacon Hill area. They were told that there first had to be a school in the area. The committee approached the Seattle School Board in 1952, and in January 1953 Southeast Beacon Hill School was opened in an old gravel pit with five portables for grades K-3 to help ease overcrowding at Dunlap. A sixth portable was added in September 1954.

The permanent name Rainier View Elementary School was selected in 1954 by the Southeast Beacon Hill community because “Mount Rainier dominates the scenery from the school.”

In fall 1961 a permanent school building was opened as a K-6 school on the same site. With the new building, enrollment went from 116 to 371.

The site, which was located on the side of a hill, was heavily graded to create flat land for the building site, the playfield, and the parking lot. The grading that was required resulted in berms on the edges of the site that are up to 10 feet tall. August Street, which crossed the site, was vacated to create the 9.5-acre school site.

The 1961 building was designed in the “Modern Architectural style” featuring a steel frame building with exterior brick veneer finishes. The large spaces of the gym and lunchroom were constructed of concrete masonry units (CMU). Exterior metal canopies shielded the entrances to the school. Classrooms featured tall glass panel windows made of clear and colored glass with low cement panels allowing adequate daylight to enter the classrooms. Covered play courts were featured at the rear of the building.

In 1968-69, Rainier View began using the continuous-progress concept of education with Individually Prescribed Instruction, a new program of studies for the time. It was still in use in 1970-71.

## Details:

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Name: **Southeast Beacon Hill School**  
Location: 11230 Luther Avenue  
Building: Portables  
Site: 9.5 acres

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1953: Opened on January 5  
as annex to Dunlap  
1954: Officially named Rainier View  
Elementary School on May 21  
1961: Closed in June



Rainier View, 1965 SPSA 264-1

## Details:

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Name: **Rainier View  
Elementary School**  
Location: 11650 Beacon Avenue S  
Building: 15-room 1-story  
Architect: Durham, Anderson & Freed  
Site: 9.5 acres

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1961: Opened in September  
2007: School Closed; Students  
transferred to Emerson  
2011: School reopened as an  
Elementary School; Renovations  
(Freeman Fong Architecture;  
BTA III); Seismic upgrades

The school's configuration changed to K-4 in 1973-74 with two special education classes and two Head Start classes that opened in vacated rooms. School enrollment was down to just under 200 in 1975-76. Under the Seattle Plan, the district's desegregation plan initiated in 1979, Rainier View became a K-5 school.

Students have worn uniforms since fall 1997. After the death of SPS Superintendent John Stanford in 1998, the SPS board of directors voted to rename the library of Rainier View after Stanford.

By the year 2000, student enrollment and achievement at Rainier View began to decline. In an effort to put the school back on course, Cathy Thompson oversaw the overhaul of instruction at Rainier View when she became principal in 2003. The school joined a group of nine "flight schools" that were awarded a \$250,000-a-year National Education Association (NEA) grant in April 2006 to improve student achievement. Unfortunately, these changes came too late as continued

decline in enrollment and few improvements led the district to close Rainier View in 2007 along with several other schools in order to balance the district budget. Rainier View's remaining students transferred to Emerson in the fall of 2007.

While the building was closed for Seattle school students, it was leased to the "Muslim School" from October 2007 through June 2010.

When enrollment started to increase across the district, the district decided to reopen many of the schools it had closed including Rainier View. The school reopened in 2011, after a \$7.2 million renovation that included new windows and doors, floor refinishing and replacement, numerous upgrades, and seismic mitigation. The renovation allowed for the 1960 building to be brought up to current educational specification standards.

The school reopened with an enrollment of 169 and a focus on math, science, and technology that continues in its present-day curriculum, along with a Writer's Workshop and "Five for Life" health and fitness program. Students quickly succeeded in the revitalized Rainier View School and enrollment steadily increased until 2019, when enrollment reached 245 students. Between 2013 and 2022, the school won numerous awards for student achievement, including the Elementary and Secondary Education (ESEA) Distinguished School Award in 2021. Anitra Pinchback-Jones, who has been the school's principal since the school reopened, has also been honored with awards, including the Milken Educator award in 2018.