

Latona

Name: John Stanford International Elementary School at Latona	Enrollment: 461
Address: 4057 5th Avenue NE	Nickname: Lions
Configuration: K-5	Colors: Purple and white



Latona, 1900 SPSA 241-7

The small community of Latona, named for the Greek goddess of darkness, developed along the tracks of the Seattle, Lakeshore and Eastern Railroad that ran from the downtown waterfront to the north end of Lake Washington. As early as 1882, Latona residents petitioned for a school. The first school, called the Lake Union School, opened in a rented portion of the new First Christian Church in 1890, the same year the area north of Lake Union became part of the City of Seattle.

In 1891, the Seattle School District purchased six lots in Latona and a new Latona School was built. The building had a wooden tower with arches and a weathervane and opened with more than 100 children and four teachers. The district set the school's boundaries as, "All that portion of the city east of Elmer Street [Wallingford Avenue] and north of the old city boundary."

As the student population grew to more than 300 in 1900-01, the church site used earlier became an annex as did the Kima Building, which was rented in December 1900. The Latona Church Annex comprised two classrooms for pupils in grades 3 and 4.

A new, larger Latona School opened in 1906. Built in the Queen Anne style, it was one of several wood frame model schools built from 1903-06. There are a few of these wood-frame schools in use as schools today (i.e., Stevens and Mann).



Latona, ca. 1892 SPSA 241-1

In 1917, an American Renaissance-style brick building was constructed on the north end of the property, perpendicular to the wood building. It contained large playrooms and an auditorium on the first floor and classrooms on the upper two floors. With this greatly enlarged space, enrollment jumped to more than 600 students. The 1892 schoolhouse was still used as an annex for manual training and home economics and later, drawing. In 1921, the district purchased lots south of the school to expand the playground area.

Midway through the school year in 1927, the 7th and 8th grades were transferred to the new Hamilton Intermediate School. Latona then went to a semi-departmental system in which grades 4-6 each had a homeroom and moved to other classrooms throughout the day for music, physical training, and art. With its reduced enrollment, the school had open classrooms, and three adjustment classes were added to the extra space.

In the late 1950s, Interstate 5 was built just east of the school. According to school records, “the coming of the freeway forced dozens of families to move out to other areas, causing a marked drop in enrollment and the progressive loss of teaching units.” As enrollment dropped, space became available and a special education class was added in 1958 and again in 1959.

In 1972, Latona’s 6th graders were transferred to Hamilton Middle School. At the same time, some students from the Interlake School, which closed in June 1971, came to Latona, and the special education classes were shifted elsewhere.

On October 1, 1975, Alternative Elementary #3 (AE #3) began operating at Latona with 125 students and four teachers. The program featured multi-grade levels within each classroom. During the 1980s, Latona developed a unique program called Escuela Latona that emphasized Spanish language and Hispanic culture. The

Details:

Name: **Lake Union School**
 Location: 2nd NE & (N)E 41st
 Building: 2-story wood church

1890: Opened as a rented school site; annexed into Seattle School District
 1892: Closed
 1901: Church moved to new facility; purchased by district in August; reopened as Latona Church Annex
 ca. 1905: Closed
 1907: Leased to Presbyterian Mission
 1910: Site sold by the district
 ca. 1920: Used by Dutch Reform Church
 1932: Sold by Immanuel Reformed Church
 n.a.: Building moved or demolished

Details:

Name: **Latona School**
 Location: (N)E 42nd Street & 5th Avenue NE
 Building: 4-room wood
 Site: 1 acre

1892: Opened
 1906: Closed as main building; opened as annex
 1924-32: Closed and demolished



Latona, 1914 SPSA 241-97

school also housed a newcomer center for students recently arrived from Southeast Asia. The AE #3 program was discontinued around 1999 when Latona School was remodeled.

The 1906 school building was designated a City of Seattle landmark in 1998. In 1999, the district renovated Latona's existing 1906 building, demolished the 1917 addition, and built a new three-story addition that significantly increased the size of the school. The 1917 brick building, known as the Blair addition, was also landmarked, but the district was allowed to demolish it because the Blair addition did not align vertically with the 1906 building. Short staircases in each hallway had been constructed to navigate the elevation discrepancies between the original building and the addition. ADA access was all but impossible without a huge investment in an elaborate elevator system.

Latona students were housed in the newly remodeled Lincoln High School during construction. The addition was completed by summer 2000 and included classrooms, a library with books available in multiple languages, and interior design elements that



Latona, 1960 SPSA 241-4

reflected world cultures. The 82-year-old tile nameplate, “Latona,” which was located on the Blair addition entryway, was made into a freestanding entryway that welcomes students to the 59,319-square-foot building.

When Latona reopened in September 2000, the program was renamed the John Stanford International Elementary School, becoming the centerpiece of Seattle’s first language-immersion program. John Stanford, Seattle School superintendent from 1995-98, saw diversity as a strength, not an obstacle. His vision was to create an international school where everyone was a language learner. The school district applied for and received a federal grant to establish an international school, but Stanford died of leukemia in 1998 before the construction was finished.

At Latona, Spanish is used for half of the school day, beginning in kindergarten. In 2001, Japanese was added as a second language option. These two languages were selected based on input from parents and local business leaders. When it opened in 2000, the school was one of 600 in the nation that offered this language-immersion approach. The international program at John Stanford was so popular that when McDonald reopened as a school in 2010, it offered the same language-immersion program as John Stanford’s in order to alleviate enrollment demands.

In 2021, the school won the inaugural Goldman Sachs Foundation Prize for Excellence in International Education for demonstrating how dual-language immersion, when started early, can improve student language fluency. The prize carried a \$25,000 award to be used by the school.

Details:

Name: **Latona School**

Location: 401 NE 42nd Street

Building: 8-room wood

Architect: James Stephen

Site: 1 acre

- 1906: Named on March 6; opened in September
- 1917: 8-room brick addition (Edgar Blair) opened
- 1921: Site expanded to 1.7 acres
- 1959-89: Site expanded to 2.21 acres
- 1981: Exterior of 1906 building designated a city landmark
- 1998: School received city landmark status
- 1999: Closed for construction; 1917 addition demolished; students relocated to Lincoln as interim site
- 2000: Addition and renovated 1906 building opened (Bassetti Architects; BEX I); program renamed John Stanford International Elementary School



Latona, 2001 c.Mary Randlett SPSA 241-100