

Meany

Name: Edmond S. Meany Middle School	Enrollment: 485
Address: 301 21st Avenue E	Nickname: Jaguars
Configuration: 6-8	Colors: Blue and silver



20th Avenue School, 1902 SPSA 092-3

The Capitol Hill area, so named because early Seattle residents hoped the territorial capitol might be built there, had only a few narrow dirt streets and a single cable-car line on Madison Street when the Seattle School District acquired a site for a school on the hill's eastern edge.

Opened in 1902, 20th Avenue School was one of eight grade schools built to keep pace with the city's mushrooming population. These "model schools" followed a standard design that was easily expanded.

During its first year of operation, the 20th Avenue School had 549 students in grades 1-8 taught by 12 teachers. Midway through the first year, the name was changed in honor of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, a nineteenth century American poet, during a district shift to select names from the American Hall of Fame. The school's first principal, Annie L. Gifford, had been teaching at Lake School when Superintendent Frank B. Cooper announced her appointment. She administered both schools until Lake got a new building in 1918 (see McGilvra). She remained at Longfellow until 1936.

On September 4, 1907, the superintendent reported the establishment of a room for a school for deaf children in the Longfellow School. Ina Smith was elected to be the special teacher for the deaf. In 1912, the School for the Deaf was moved to Washington and occupied four classes.

One student in those early days, Vera Waller, who later became a math teacher at Edmond S. Meany Junior High, recalled in an interview done in 1950, "I could never forget the assemblies, which were held in the halls ... We sat on the steps leading to the upper floors. Back of the school on the northeast side was a pasture, where we



Meany, ca. 1945 SPSA 109-9

used to play stump tag. A riding academy was in front of the building. Vacant lots and woods surrounded it on all sides. Picking blackberries was our common job going back and forth to school.”

A new wing containing eight classrooms was added in 1907. In 1936, the school acquired property to accommodate a playground, which formerly had been the Seattle Riding and Driving Academy.

In 1941, the school’s name was changed to Edmond S. Meany, and it became a 7th and 8th grade center. Students in the first six grades were sent to neighboring schools, and 7th and 8th graders from Lowell, Minor, Montlake, Stevens, and Summit attended the center. The next year Madrona also sent its older grades. The main building was remodeled, and a wing was added to accommodate the increased enrollment.

The school’s namesake, Edmond Stephen Meany, came to Seattle July 10, 1877, as a young boy from Michigan. He attended Central I, a cramped two-room building where some classes were held in the attic. Meany’s father, a steamboat captain, drowned in the Skagit River, and Edmond became the main support for his mother and younger siblings. He was able to complete his studies at the Territorial University, graduating in 1885. He served in the Washington State Legislature and helped select the new site for the University of Washington campus. An esteemed professor of history, Meany contributed much to scholarship in the area of Pacific Northwest history.

In 1945, an auditorium-gymnasium and two home economics classrooms were added. The following year 9th graders began attending and the name was changed to Edmond S. Meany Junior High. The building now housed 34 classrooms and two portables with a student population of 787. In 1955, a large “sawtooth roof” addition containing a library, and science, art, music, and industrial training rooms opened on the north side of the property. Enrollment at this time exceeded 1,000 students.

Details:

Name: **20th Avenue School**

Location: 301 21st Avenue E

Building: 12-room frame

Architect: E.W. Houghton

Site: 2.5 acres

- 1902: Opened
- 1903: Renamed Longfellow on March 7
- 1907: Addition (James Stephen)
- 1936: Site expanded
- 1941: Name changed to Edmond S. Meany School on July 21; addition (Naramore & Brady)
- 1945: Addition (n.a.)
- 1946: Became Edmond S. Meany Junior High School
- 1952: Site expanded to 5.67 acres
- 1955: Addition (John W. Maloney)
- 1962: 1902 section demolished; new central core opened in April (Edward Mahlum)
- 1971: Became Edmond S. Meany Middle School
- 2009: School closed as a middle school; Building reopened for NOVA and the Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center
- 2010-14: Seismic upgrades
- 2015: NOVA moved to Mann
- 2016: Bilingual Orientation Center moved to Minor; Program renamed Seattle World School
- 2017: Renovation (Miller Hayashi; BEX IV); School reopened as attendance area middle school



Meany, 1960 SPSA 109-6

The school board approved plans for a new construction in October 1960. The later additions would remain but the 1902 building was torn down. Before the old structure met its demise, students researched the history of their school and prepared three copies of a book summarizing their findings. The books were bound with pieces of wood taken from the original school building.

Plans for the new school included conversion of the auditorium-gymnasium into a lunchroom-auditorium, plus new classrooms, office facilities, and a new double gymnasium. The Seattle Parks Department constructed the attached Miller Community Center at the southeast corner of the building, west of the gymnasium. An agreement with Seattle Parks Department allowed for the joint construction and use of the gymnasium outside of school hours. The new central core was a single-story brick structure with a higher roofline.

During the 1960s, the nickname of Meany was the Shamrocks and the colors were green and white.

The Central Area School Council was formed in 1969 to give the community a stronger voice in the management of its schools. Meany and Madrona became linked as a middle school in 1970 for grades 5-8, with 7th and 8th grades housed at Meany. In September 1971, a middle school desegregation plan was launched. Students from Eckstein, Hamilton, and Wilson were bussed to Meany as part of an effort to create more racially balanced learning environments. Meany also participated in the city-wide desegregation plan initiated in 1978 and the Controlled Choice plan of 1988-89.



Meany, 1963 SPSA 109-3

In 1987, Meany won national recognition from the U.S. Department of Education as an exemplary secondary school. In spite of this, Meany's enrollment sank to 591 in 1989, the lowest of the district's 10 middle schools.

From 1996 to 2001, Meany was a math, science, and arts magnet school, bringing in new staff and funding for special programs during that time. Enrollment rose to 618 students in its first year. A pilot Montessori program began in 1998-99 in a single multigrade classroom. The school also boasted award-winning musical groups and an aviation training program, which integrated multiple subjects and hands-on activities. The aviation students built replica planes and hot air balloons, then went to Boeing Field for flying experience.

In the late 1990s, the parks department constructed the new stand-alone Miller Community Center on their property adjacent to Meany, but continued to operate the original community center, still attached to Meany as a recreational and program annex.

In the early 2000s, enrollment declined at Meany, reaching a low of 413 students in 2003. Although enrollment increased to 497 in 2006, the district chose to close Meany along with several other schools in 2009. After Meany was closed, the Meany building became home for NOVA High School and the Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center in the fall of 2009. This move endured until the fall of 2015, when NOVA returned to its previous location at the Horace Mann School Building at 2410 E Cherry Street. A year later, the Secondary Bilingual Orientation Center (now Seattle World School) moved into the T. T. Minor Elementary building.

With funding from the BEX IV Levy and plans prepared by architect Miller Hayashi, Meany was fully renovated starting in 2016 and reopened as an attendance area middle school in the fall of 2017 with an enrollment of 492. The renovation included opening up the cafeteria to connect it visually to both sides of the school, a new café area to expand seating, uncovering existing clerestory windows, and creating new window openings in the kitchen to bring in additional light.



Meany, ca. 1970 SPSA 109-8