

Kurose

Name:	Aki Kurose School	Enrollment:	610
Address:	3928 S Graham Street	Nickname:	Peace Cranes
Configuration:	6–8	Colors:	Blue and gold



Sharples, ca. 1960 SPSA 112-3

In 1952, Casper W. Sharples Junior High School opened to serve a large area in south Seattle, taking in students from Beacon Hill, Muir, Whitworth, Hawthorne, Van Asselt, Emerson, Brighton, Dunlap, Columbia, and Rainier View. In addition to over 1,220 students in grades 7–9, 130 sixth graders attended the new school that first year.

Casper Wistar Sharples was a prominent Seattle physician who was one of the first nine to take the state medical examinations in Washington state. He was also the long-time Chief of Staff at Children's Orthopedic Hospital. His wife, the former Anne Goodrell, was the physical education supervisor for Seattle Public Schools, and, beginning in 1922, Dr. Sharples served for nine years on the Seattle School Board.

The site comprised 4.8 acres owned by the district and 12.9 acres of Brighton Playfield, which was leased for 99 years from the Seattle Parks Department. On February 11, 1955, a ceremony was held to commemorate the selection of a school flower. Sharples' granddaughter

Name: **Casper W. Sharples Junior High School**

Location: 3928 S Graham Street

Building: 40-room, 2-story brick

Architect: William Mallis

Site: 4.8 acres

1952: Opened

1981: Closed as regular school in June

1981–87: Alternative program site

1988–90: Interim site

1989–99: Alternative program site

1999: Became *Sharples Middle School*; renamed *Aki Kurose Middle School*

helped plant a wistaria bush to the left of the main entrance. It was selected because Caspar W. Sharples was named for Dr. Caspar Wistar, an anatomy professor at the University of Pennsylvania. The flower, wistaria (commonly known as wisteria), was named for Wistar.

Enrollment increased to 1,839 in 1956–57 but, in September 1957, it dropped to 1,550 with the opening of Asa Mercer Junior High, which drew from Beacon Hill, Muir, and parts of Van Asselt and Columbia. In 1959–60, enrollment peaked at 1,878 with 17 portables in use. Rainier Beach Junior High School opened in September 1960 for students coming out of Rainier View, Dunlap, and Emerson, lowering Sharples' enrollment to 1,290. By 1974, enrollment had dropped to 950.

In the 1970s, Mandarin Chinese was taught as a foreign language. The district's desegregation plan, which began in 1978, brought in students from the Broadview Elementary School and Wilson Junior High School areas.

In 1981, the school board was dealing with declining district-wide enrollment as well as the shift from junior high schools to middle schools. The board chose to close Sharples as a regular school in favor of the newer South Shore that had been designed as a middle school. Sharples then became the site for several special programs.

Sharples Alternative Secondary School opened in 1981–82. Students came mainly from the central and southeast portions of the city. The program served students who began 9th grade, were under age 21, and were generally behind in credits. Sharples also became the home of a reentry program for students who had dropped out or had been suspended, the Project Transition vocational program for handicapped youth, and the Teenage Parent Program. The school made an "attempt to accommodate anything in their lives that might prevent them from finishing school—including children, jobs or brushes with the juvenile justice system." In addition, it made "an extra effort to make students aware of vocational training and job opportunities."

Sharples also housed a bilingual orientation program for a large number of newly arrived immigrants who came from many different countries and were in need of an intensive English language program. This program was designed to ready them for entrance to regular schools and to help them adjust to life in a new country.

From September 1988 to June 1990, students from Franklin were housed at Sharples while their school was being renovated. The bilingual program was relocated to three different schools in the district, and the Alternative Secondary School moved into leased space at Washington Institute for Applied Technology (the former Seattle Opportunities Industrialization Center Building) at 22nd Avenue and Jackson Street. A proposed move of the Alternative Secondary School to Boren did not materialize after a survey showed that 86 percent of the students would drop out if that happened.

In September 1990, the district's bilingual program, the Alternative Secondary School, the reentry program, teenage parent program, and Samoan Integration Services, established to assist those who were having trouble in the classroom, all returned to Sharples.

The African American Academy came to Sharples from Colman for the 1992–93 school year because it needed more space. It moved to Magnolia the following year because of problems encountered in sharing the building with older students.

In September 1999, the various Sharples programs moved to South Shore Middle School, while that program moved to Sharples and assumed the name Sharples Middle School. The school was renamed to honor Aki Kurose in November 1999. Kurose taught in the district for 25 years and inspired many with her actions for peace and understanding among all cultures. She received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Education and the United Nations Human Rights Award. Her favorite saying was, "If we are to teach real peace in the world we will have to begin with children." It has been suggested that the name Sharples be assigned to another Seattle School District facility to continue honoring the pioneering physician and education advocate.

Aki Kurose School offers reading-language arts-social studies block classes over all three years. Reading and writing are stressed in all classes. The current principal, Bi Hoa Caldwell, was awarded the Seattle Alliance for Education A+ award in spring 1998.



Sharples, 1960 SPSA 112-37