

Lowell

Name:	Lowell Elementary School	Enrollment:	386
Address:	1058 E Mercer Street	Nickname:	Dragons
Configuration:	K-5	Colors:	none



Lowell, 1911 MOHAI 83.10.6725

Between 1889 and 1892, the Seattle School District constructed eight new schools, more than doubling the number of public school buildings. Pontius School, in the Pontius Addition of the northeast section of the city, ultimately honored R.W. Pontius, a member of the Seattle School Board in the 1860s (see Cascade). This area, today known as Capitol Hill, was sparsely populated, with only a few scattered homes and unimproved streets.

The eight-room brick building was a Tudor-style design. In the 1890–91 school year, the new school opened to 261 students in grades 1–6. (Seventh and eighth grades were added over the next two years.) Children going to school from the area near Pine Street and east of Broadway followed a path along the east side of a swamp.

The name of Pontius School was short-lived. In 1891 it was renamed Columbia School. Over the next decade, many new homes were built in the neighborhood, and enrollment at the school doubled by 1902. In 1904, an addition to the north side of the building increased the number of classrooms to 16.

After the annexation of a portion of the southeast into Seattle in 1908, the Seattle School District included a Columbia City School as well as a Columbia School. The ensuing confusion led to the renaming of the Capitol Hill school in 1910. Following a pattern of commemorating famous Americans, the school was called Lowell, honoring James Russell Lowell, 19th century poet, scholar, and diplomat from Massa-

Name: **Pontius School**
Location: 11th Avenue N and
E Mercer Street
Building: 8-room wood
Architect: Saunders & Houghton
Site: 1.66 acres

1890: Opened
1891: Renamed *Columbia School*
1904: Addition (James Stephen)
1910: Renamed *Lowell School*
1913: Site expanded
1919: Addition (Edgar Blair)
1921: Site expanded to 3.9 acres
1959: 1890 structure demolished
1960: Addition (John Graham
& Co.)

chusetts. A portrait of Lowell was installed in the main hallway together with his autograph.

In 1913, the Lowell School was enlarged, and plans for another addition got underway. Construction began in late 1917 but, because of wartime shortages, the addition was not completed until 1919. The new brick wing, with eight classrooms, was located to the south of the older structure and connected by a gabled passageway. In 1921, the district purchased adjoining property to the north between Roy and Aloha Streets. This was intended as a junior high school site, but these plans were abandoned, and it became a playfield for Lowell.

Following the April 1949 earthquake, students in grades 1–6 from Cascade School were bused 11 blocks to Lowell. Because Cascade never reopened, these pupils became part of the Lowell student body

The original 1890 wood structure was torn down in 1959 and, in 1960, replaced by an addition containing a gymnasium, auditorium, and 11 classrooms. Lowell parents had repeatedly petitioned the school board for a gymnasium.

Part of the new wing was devoted to a program for orthopedically handicapped children. That program was formerly at Warren Avenue School, which was demolished for the 1962 Seattle World's Fair. It was moved to Lowell after being temporarily housed at Holgate for a year. Lowell's program for the handicapped provided instruction for kindergarten through high school students in need of individualized physical, occupational, and speech therapies. Enrollment in 1964–65 included 108 special education and 391 regular students. In 1973, new playground facilities were installed making Lowell the only school in the nation with a play area designed to integrate handicapped and other children. In 1993, the outdoor play area was again improved to allow



Lowell, ca. 1960 SPSA 245-15



Lowell, 1963 SPSA 245-3

equal access for the physically and mentally challenged students, who comprised about 75 percent of the school's population.

In fall 1997, the Accelerated Progress Program (APP) moved into the building, which it shares with the special education program. APP offers accelerated instruction for students who perform within the top 1.5 percent of the district on standardized tests. A challenging curriculum is taught by teachers specially trained to work with highly capable children. The blending of the two programs has worked well, especially in art and music classes where the students interact freely.