

Fairmount Park

Name:	Fairmount Park Elementary	Enrollment:	250
Address:	3800 SW Findlay Street	Nickname:	Falcons
Configuration:	K-5	Colors:	none



Fairmount Park, ca. 1974 SPSA 222-2

The Fairmount Park neighborhood is said to have been named by a homesick realtor from Philadelphia, where there is a beautiful area with that name. The school was quickly assembled just off Fauntleroy Way to relieve crowded conditions at the triangle of schools that surrounded it: Jefferson to the northwest, Gatewood to the southwest, and High Point to the southeast. The adjacent property to the north was acquired by the parks department. The site of both school and park had been swampy land with alder trees, blackberry bushes, nettles, and mosquitoes—the remains of a once thriving pioneer sawmill.

The original Fairmount Park School comprised two rows of portables set up for 248 pupils in grades K-6. At times, students and staff felt like they were pioneers themselves, making do with limited facilities. At first the playfield was not cleared or paved, and offices had to be set up in a classroom. Gradually, however, conditions improved. More portables were erected as enrollment continued to grow, reaching 340 in September 1958. A double portable was also brought in to serve as a lunchroom and meeting room.

In the early 1960s, mothers of some pupils appealed to the school board for a permanent facility. Fortunately, funds were available from other district building projects. Over 400 pupils entered the new building when it opened in fall 1964. The functional, light brick structure with dark-stained woodwork was a welcome sight. Included at the new school were a spacious auditorium/lunchroom and a gymnasium adjacent to the covered playcourt and the outdoor playfield.

When the permanent school opened in 1964, two classrooms were unoccupied, but they were filled by two classes from Alki when an earthquake damaged their school in April 1965. That September enrollment exceeded 500 pupils.

Name: **Fairmount Park School**
Location: 38th Avenue SW
& Brandon Street
Building: Portables

1955: Opened on September 7 as
annex to Jefferson
1957: Became independent school
1964: Closed in June

Name: **Fairmount Park
Elementary School**
Location: 3800 SW Findlay Street
Building: Brick
Architect: Carlson, Eley & Grevstad
Site: 3.1 acres

1964: Opened in September

Several innovative teaching methods were pioneered at Fairmount Park, including divided day and individualized reading programs. In 1973–74, all 5th graders and some 6th graders participated in Project USE (Urban-Suburban Environment) in which they were teamed with classes from Bellevue to study the effects of environment on living things. A K–6 math lab was set up in the 1972–73 school year, and a woodshop class for 6th graders became part of the Career Education Program. Two classes of neurologically impaired children occupied portables 4 and 5.

Under the district’s desegregation plan, Fairmount Park remained K–5 (from 1978–81) and K–6 (from 1981–88).

In his first year at Fairmount Park in 1990–91, Carl Leatherman was named “Principal of the Year” by the Elementary School Principals of Washington. One of his trademarks was singing “Happy Birthday” to every child on their birthday.

Current activities include an outdoor science program featuring model rocketry, Young Inventors, and salmon enhancement.



Fairmount Park, 1965 SPSA 222-3