



April 2020

Preserving Leslie Junior High School History

It's had different names and changed shape over the years, but the original Leslie Junior High School building has been in constant service to students in Salem since it first opened in 1927. Leslie's brick and wood-paneled walls have witnessed a lot of learning, fun and memories created by the thousands of students and hundreds of staff members who have passed through its halls over the decades.

Bond-funded expansion and improvements at South Salem High School will replace the old Leslie complex with modern, seismically-safer learning spaces. The new wing at South to replace Leslie will include a new performing arts center, expanded career and technical (vocational) education spaces, 12 new classrooms and special education spaces. Other improvements at South include additional parking spaces, a new auxiliary gym, new tennis courts, two new science labs and replacement batting cages. Over \$66 million will be invested in improvements at South Salem High School.

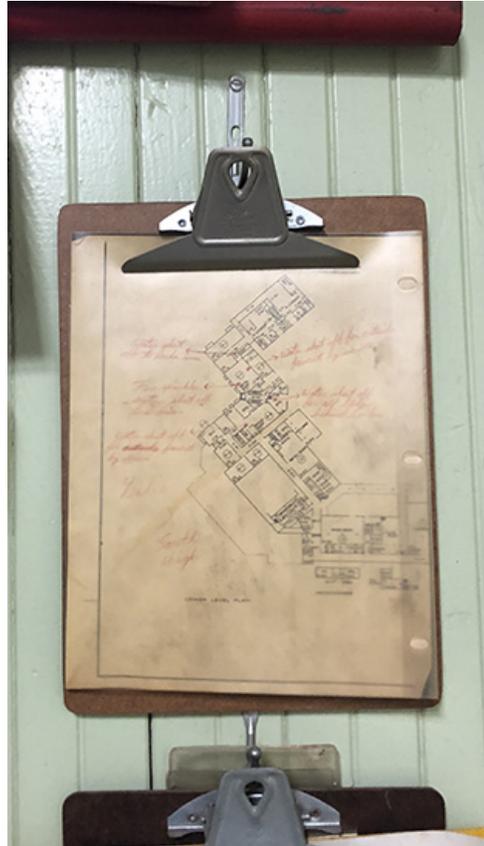
Salem-Keizer Public Schools is working to preserve some of the memories and the history of the original Leslie Junior High School building. Several items from the building have been salvaged and will be considered for use in an educational display that will be included in the new wing being built at South. Some of these items are bricks from the building exterior, green block from interior hallways, a speaker from the original PA system, a theater seat and more. Work to determine the contents and design of the display will begin in a few weeks.

Unique Leslie features that are very large and in poor condition that physically won't be considered for the display are the cupolas from the roof and the original school sign. However, these items may still be represented in displays or the documentary video to be created about the school – the sign and a cupola have been scanned by a professional 3D capture service that creates a detailed, three-dimensional digital record and so preserves their unique design.



A drone camera takes a 3D scan of a Leslie Junior High School cupola

The district is also working with the Willamette Heritage Center to discover which items may be suitable for the museum’s collection. So far, an old borax soap dispenser, two locker doors and a building map long-used by maintenance staff have been set aside for the museum.



An old Boraxo soap dispenser and floorplan used in building maintenance have been set aside as donations to the Willamette Heritage Center.

The community is invited to help tell the story of Leslie by contributing photos and memories to a documentary video project. Please share your favorite stories of time at the school through this special page on the district website. <https://salkeiz.k12.or.us/2018-bond-program/leslie-memorial/>

For more information about bond-funded construction at South Salem High School, please visit <https://salkeiz.k12.or.us/south-salem-bond/>

About Leslie History

Leslie Junior High School was originally constructed as a two-story (plus a basement) “V” shaped structure on Howard Street at a cost of about \$88,000. The school was needed to provide relief for overcrowding at Parrish Junior High School and at McKinley School, which was serving both elementary and junior high students at the time. Auditorium and gymnasium additions to Leslie were constructed in 1936, reshaping the school into a “W”. The Leslie complex was connected to the newly-constructed South Salem High School in 1954. When the new Leslie Middle School was built in 1997 on Pringle Road, the old Leslie building became the home of Howard Street Charter School until 2019, and was also referred to as the South High Annex.