Arlington Public Schools

Facilities Planning

DLRGROUP

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

December 2025

10-25126-01

Contents

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Introductions

Acknowledgments

On Behalf of our entire DLR Group team, we would like to acknowledge the following individuals and groups of people that have supported the team's efforts with information, data and professional perspective and opinions that were invaluable to producing this document.

DLR Group Team

- Darin Hanigan AIA ALEP
- Haley Herman
- Dr. Tonya Merrigan

Mission & Vision Statements

Arlington Public Schools' Mission:
The mission of Arlington Public Schools is to empower all students to develop skills for life-long learning and responsible decision making in order to contribute to a global society.

Arlington Public Schools' Vision:
For all students to discover a Passion, feel a sense of Purpose, and find or create a Pathway.

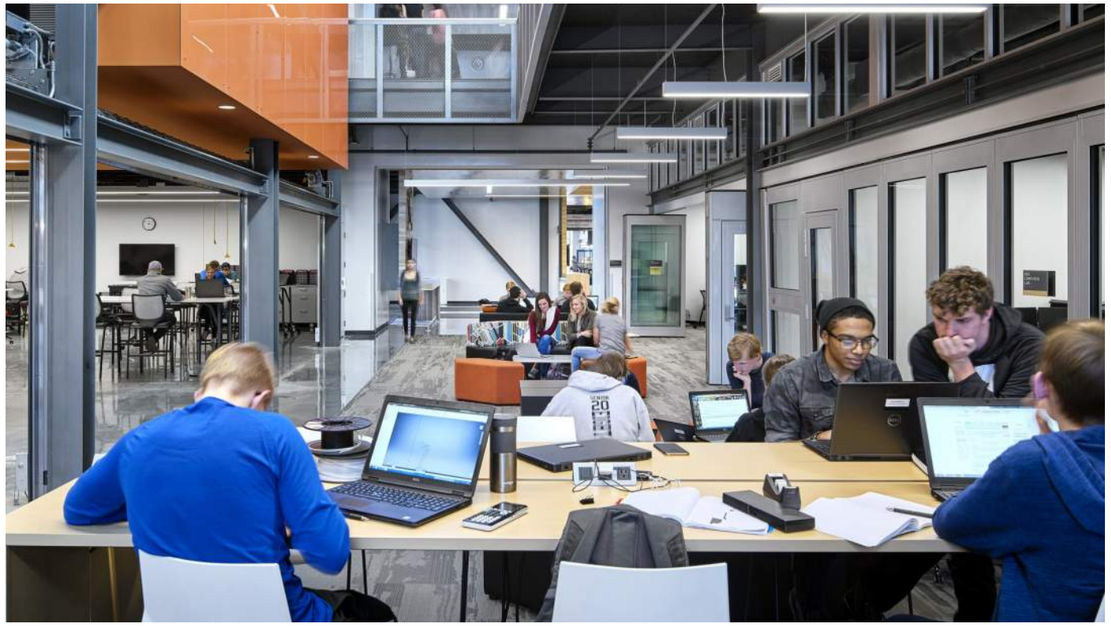
Project Schedule

02

Research Informed Design

Adoption Rate to Reach 25% of U.S. Population

Electricity	45 years
Telephone	36 years
Radio	31 years
Television	26 years
PC	16 years
Mobile Phone	13 years
Internet	7 years
iPad	2.5 years
TikTok	**4 months**



"We are currently preparing students for jobs that don't yet exist, using technologies that haven't been invented, in order to solve problems, we don't even know are problems yet. In schools designed before the advent of color television." - Richard Riley, Former United States Secretary of Education

Why should we care about school design?

What impacts student learning progress?

Individual student variability =

50%

Teacher effectiveness =

30%

Physical learning environment =

16%

[1] Hattie, John. “Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement.” (2008) Nye, Barbara, Spyros Konstantopoulos, and Larry Hedges. “How large Are Teachers effects?” Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis 26, no. 3 (2004): 237-57

[2] Barrett, Peter, Fay Davies, Yufan Zhang, and Lucinda Barrett. “The impact of classroom design on pupils’ learning: Final results of a holistic, multi-level analysis.” Building and Environment 89 (2015): 118-133.

Innovative Learning Environments

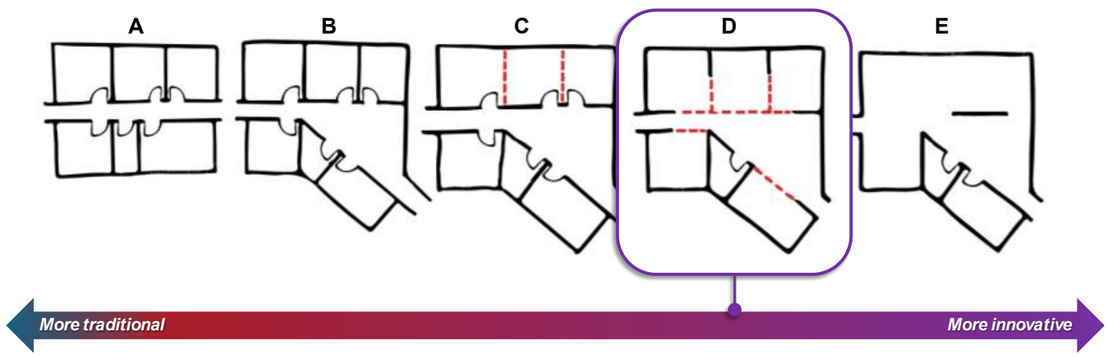
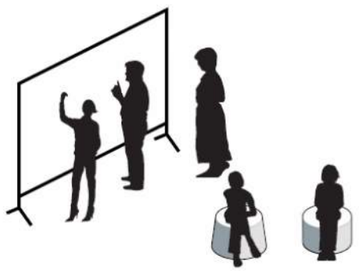


Illustration
Graph adapted from Imms, Mahat, Byers, & Murphy (2017)

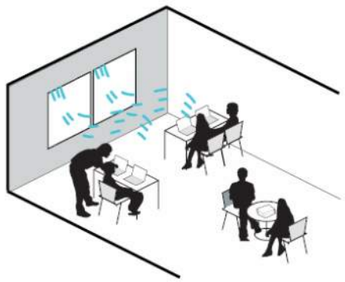
FINNS Framework

Activating Design Research to Empower Learners



Flexibility & Operability
Movement Matters

Individualization
Physical Needs are Unique



Naturalness & Nature
Health & Comfort are Critical

Stimulation
Activate the Senses

Flexibility & Operability

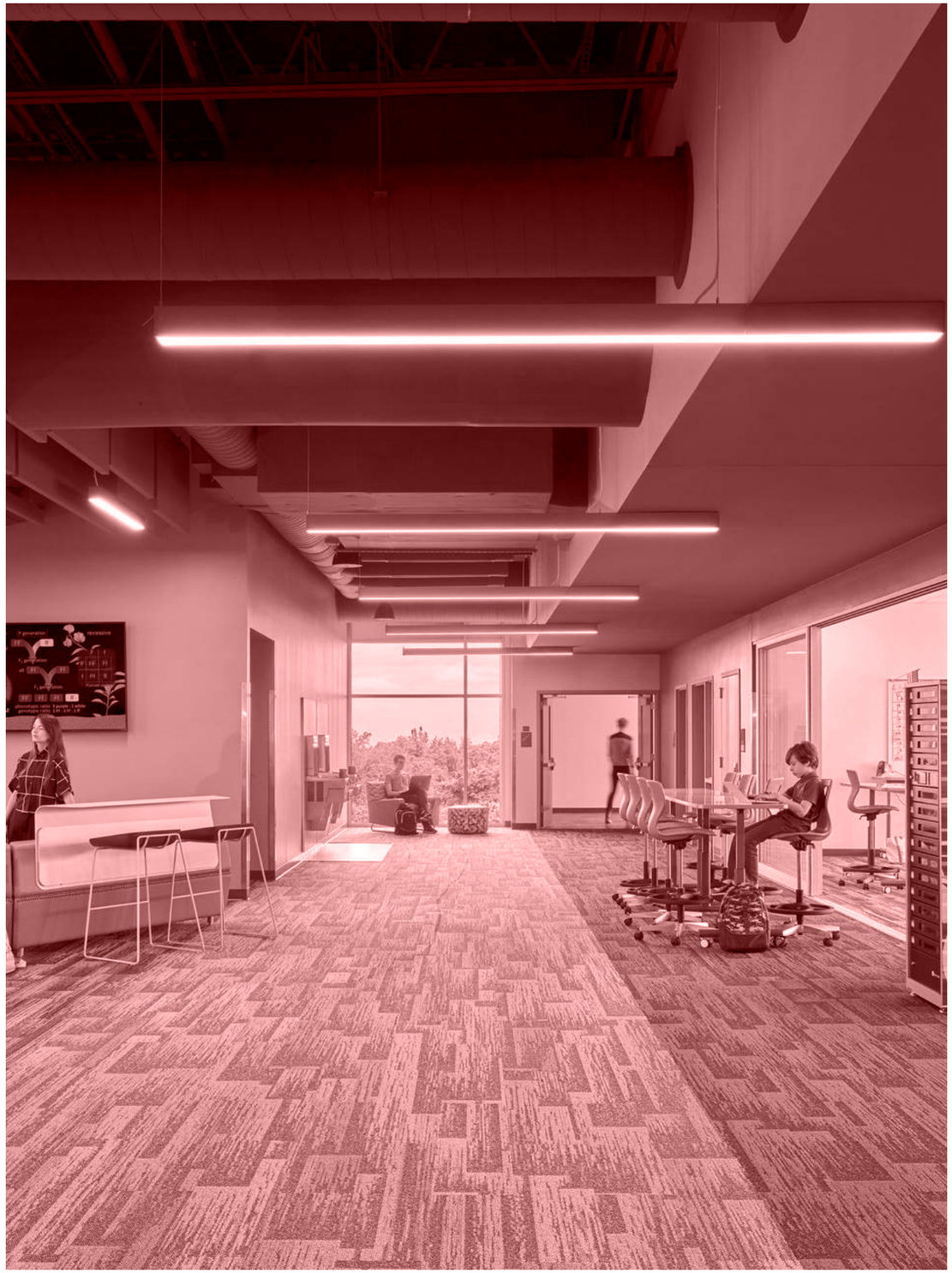
Individualization

Nature & Naturalness

Stimulation

P.Barrett (2018) Well designed classrooms can boost learning, case study on EPSRC Lens on Research and Innovation wepage: https://epsrc.ukri.org/newsevents/casestudies/well-designed-classrooms-can-boost-learning/

Illustration
Graph adapted from Imms, Mahat, Byers, & Murphy (2017)



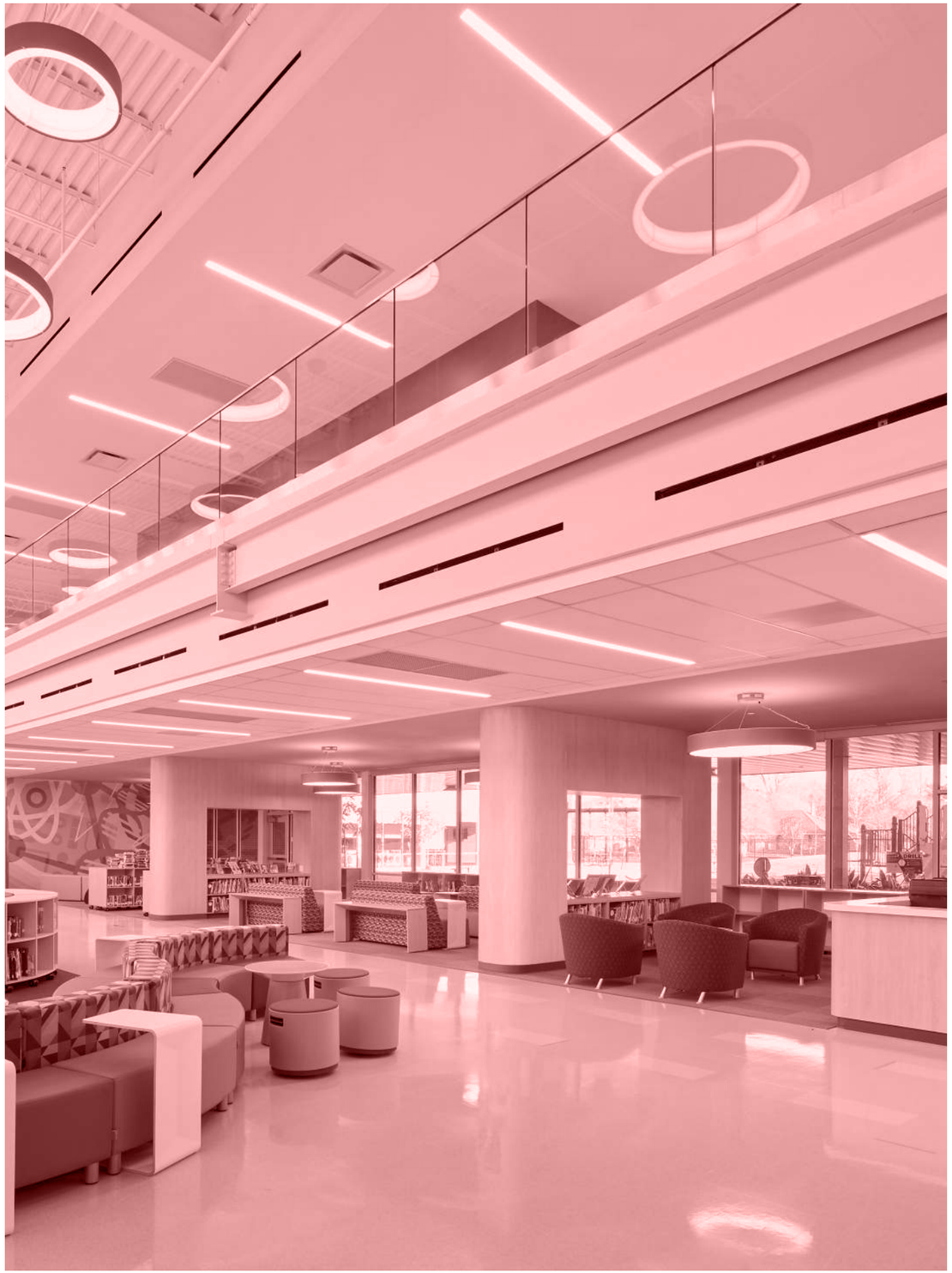
03

Educational Visualization

Participants & Their Hopes for the Project

Project Aspirations

- Updating
- Modernization
- Community space
- Growth for academics
- Increased learning
- Support for students
- Future growth
- Creat an environment to nurture kids
- Daylighting
- Outdoor spaces
- Student experience
- Better auditorium
- Increased storage
- Thinking of the future
- Growth
- Playing catch-up
- More space
- Equal facilities for every sport and organization
- Wrestling room
- Focus on students and staff
- School pride
- Taking care of all the kids and programs

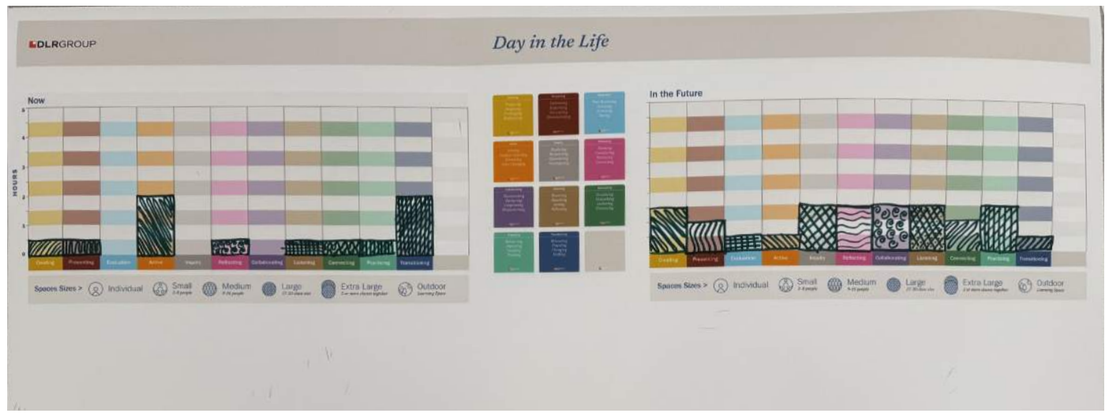


A Day in the Life Activity

Although we cannot predict with certainty the types of jobs that will exist in the future, we know that today's students will need a variety of skills to be successful in life. Knowing this, we must ask what learning experiences will provide students with the essential skills to be prepared for the ever-changing world. Taking this into account, The Day in the Life Activity is designed to investigate and discuss what a day of education might look like in the future. User groups start by developing a student persona and then discuss how a day of learning might look like when barriers are removed and students are engaged in the learning activities that prepare them for their futures. Finally, the percentage of time within these learning activities are identified. This activity results in informing space implications for designers to use within the design of the learning environment.

Our Takeaways

All 4 students spent more of their day collaborating, connecting, creating and presenting while maintaining time to listen, practice and transition between activities. There was a need for individual, small, medium, and large spaces as well as outdoor learning options for all 4 students.



Learning Connections

Before discussing the built environment, we must acknowledge changes are occurring in teaching and learning as there is an ongoing shift from the teacher-centered to the students-centered model of education. Giving attention to the process of how the facility will support learning and teaching, the Learning Connections Activity assists in developing educational priorities to maintain a clear focus on what is important.

The user groups begin with selecting an activity card to represent how learning will be facilitated in their new environment. Then the user groups select the teaching methodology that will support that type of learning. Continuing the process, spaces are selected that will enable engaging experiences from the selected learning and teaching models. Finally, furniture, technology, and safety/security priorities are identified to embrace the educational vision.

These selections made by user groups prompt guiding principles of design – the north star by which our designers integrate throughout the development of the final product. The Learning Connections Activity bridge between teaching and learning and the spaces and tools. Ultimately, this informs the design process by establishing an expectation of teaching and learning and how the space can be crafted as the ultimate tool.

Our Takeaways

All 4 groups were aligned in their desire to have a more student-directed learning process and to have teachers utilize approaches that supported the individual student's growth. Teachers engaged in this type of teaching help students identify, investigate, and research issues in order to respond to challenges and complex problems. Spaces needed for this type of learning include those that can be used for a variety of things such as presentations, are adaptable and flexible, and include outdoor spaces as well as traditional and smaller classrooms. Furniture and Technology had common responses from all groups including the ability for it to be flexible and fit the needs of the individual student. Finally, safety/security focused on the need for students to have connections both in the school and the community.

Desired Types of Learning

VISIBLE LEARNING

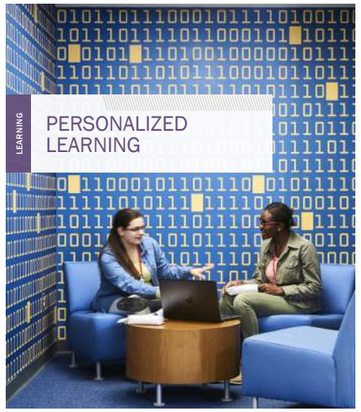
- Visible actions of learning; students understand their task, show their thinking and creating process, and reflect on their learning.

PERSONALIZED LEARNING

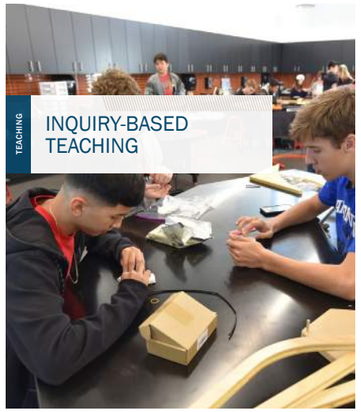
- Learning is tailored to the preferences, interests, and passions of the learners. Instruction is paced to the learner's unique needs. Learners set goals with educator's support.

AUTHENTIC/REAL WORLD LEARNING

- Learners explore, discuss, and meaningfully construct concepts and relationships in contexts that involve real-world problems and projects that are relevant to the learner.



Types of Teaching to Support Desired Learning



INQUIRY-BASED TEACHING

- A dynamic form of active learning that begins with inquiry, problems, or scenarios. Learners then identify, investigate, and research issues and respond to challenges or complex problems.

WORKSHOP MODEL TEACHING

- A pedagogy that promotes learning, growth, and reflection through collaboration and small group instruction.

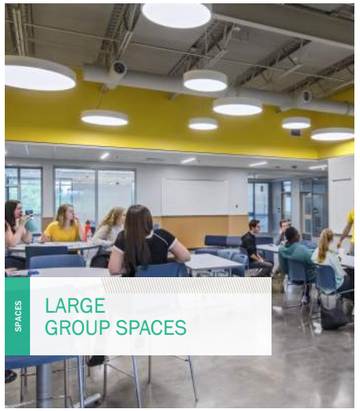
TEACHING THROUGH INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

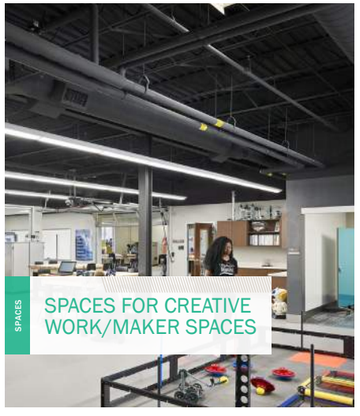
- An instructional process in which digital-age skills and predagogy support learning, communication, and creativity in a technology-rich environment.

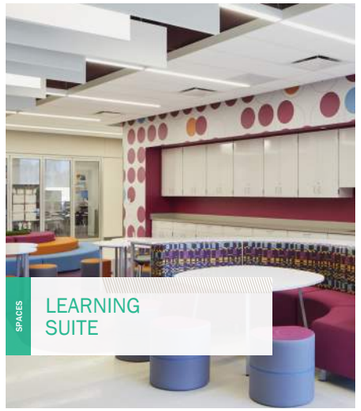
DIFFERENTIATED TEACHING

- A practice where the content, process, and resources are tailored to meet individual needs.

Spaces that Facilitate Teaching and Learning







LARGE GROUP SPACES

- Large learning areas that will encompass a minimum of a full class size.

SPACES THAT CAN BE EASILY ADAPTED/ CHANGED

- Walls that can be modified/moved to create different sizes or configurations of learning environments.

OUTDOOR SPACES

- Spaces that allow for outdoor learning such as gardens, outdoor creative spaces, nature walks, and play areas.

LEARNING SUITE

- Multiple learning spaces shared by multiple educators vs separate classrooms. Spaces are flexible for use in diverse activity settings.

MEDIA/IDEA LAB

- A shared space with books, technology, and maker spaces where learners are free to research and create.

SPACES THAT ALLOW FOR MOVEMENT

- Spaces that are conducive to movement and provide opportunites for learners to walk, exercise, or simply move from one area or activity to another.

SPACES FOR CREATIVE WORK/MAKER SPACES

- Specific spaces that are designed for creation and innovation such as a creation station, maker space, or lab.

PRESENTATION SPACES

- Areas that allow for individual or group presentatins such as learning stairs, tiered areas, and shared presentation areas.

CONNECTIONS TO NATURE

- Bringing elements of nature indoors, such as natural light, visibility to the outdoors, and graphics or products that mimic nature.

Furniture that Facilitates Teaching and Learning

ERGONOMIC FURNITURE

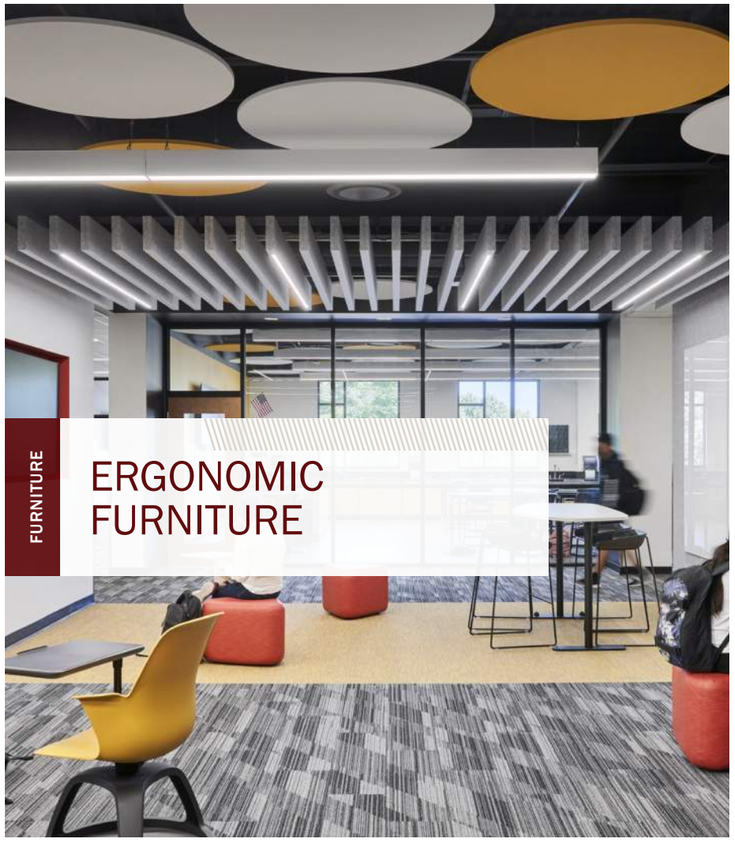
- The making of the furnishings and materials with the purpose of right-sized furniture that adapts to the body to eliminate discomfort and optimize human well-being.

FLEXIBLE/ADAPTABLE FURNITURE TYPES

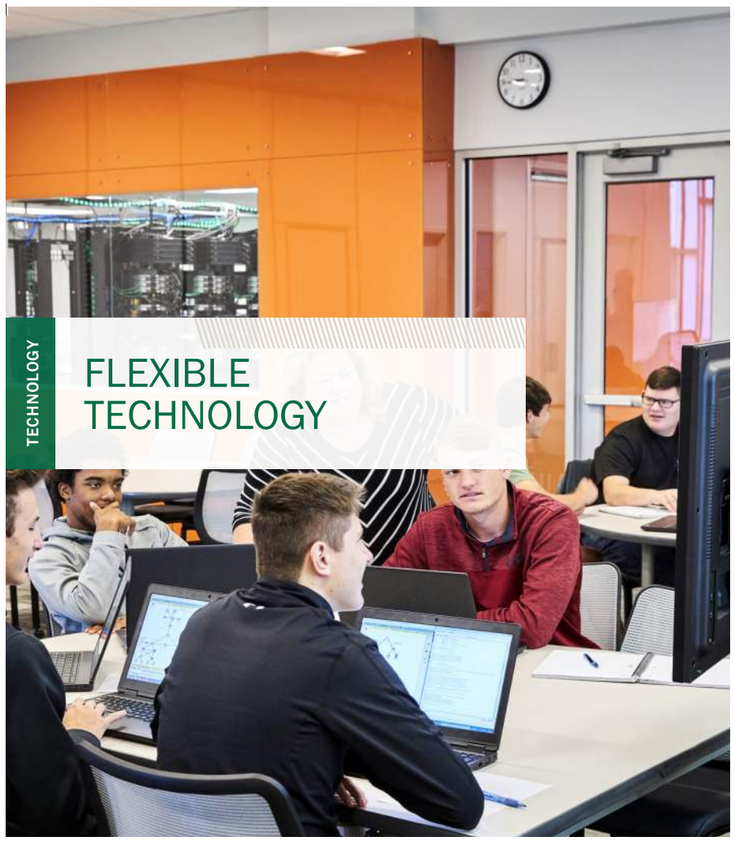
- Furniture that is easily moved to form different groupings, offers different heights, and fuels creativity.

FURNITURE THAT SUPPORTS INDIVIDUALS

- Furniture that allows for choice in posture, movement, and adjustment to meet individual needs.



Technology that Facilitates Teaching and Learning



FLEXIBLE TECHNOLOGY

- Mobile technology that allows for use on different surfaces and in numerous ways.

EDUCATIONAL VISUALIZATION

How We Create Safe, Equitable Environments that Support All

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

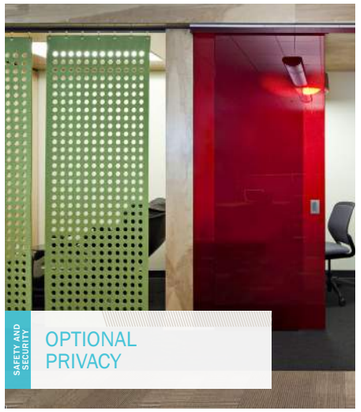
- Strategies that promote health and well-being, such as ensuring air quality, providing natural light and access to plant life, and creating spaces for movement/exercise.

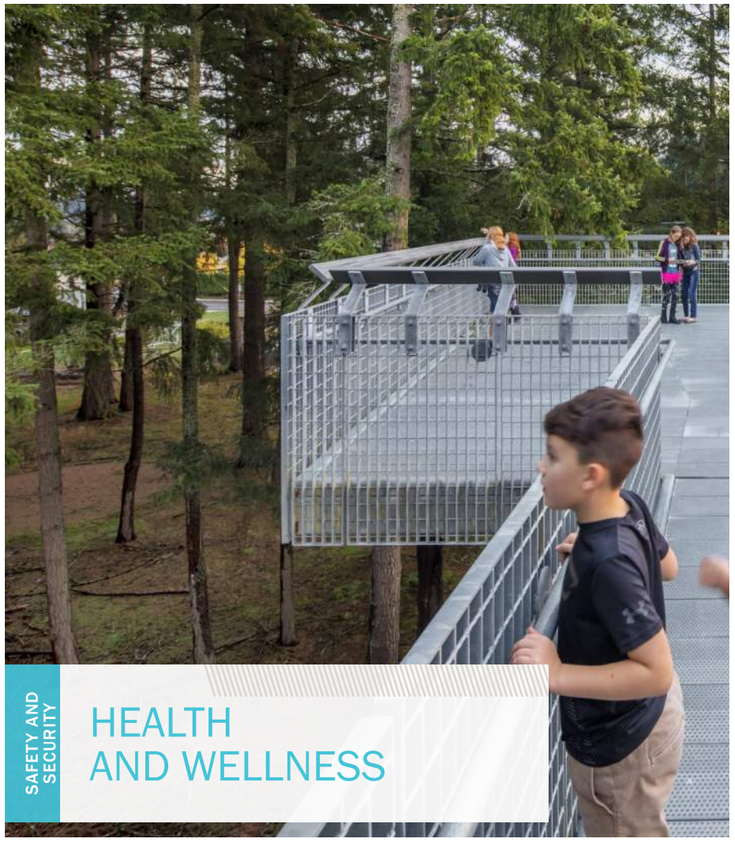
OPTIONAL PRIVACY

- Items that allow for privacy in transparent environments such as drop-down screens, frosted glass, or acoustical curtains and other mobile objects that can strategically obscure the line of sight.

COMMUNITY/BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

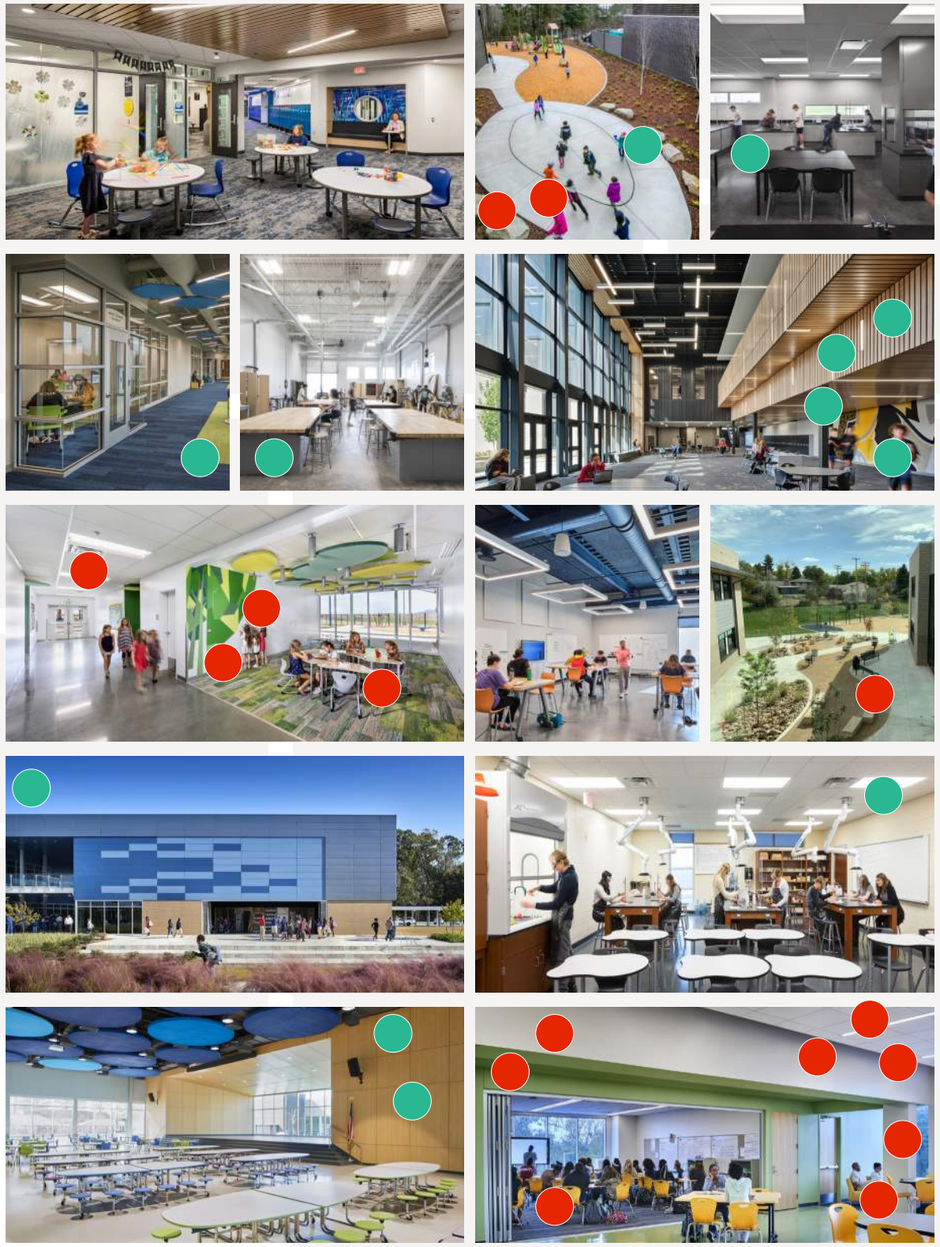
- Providing spaces and activities that promote positive connections and interaction between schools, the workplace, and the community at large.





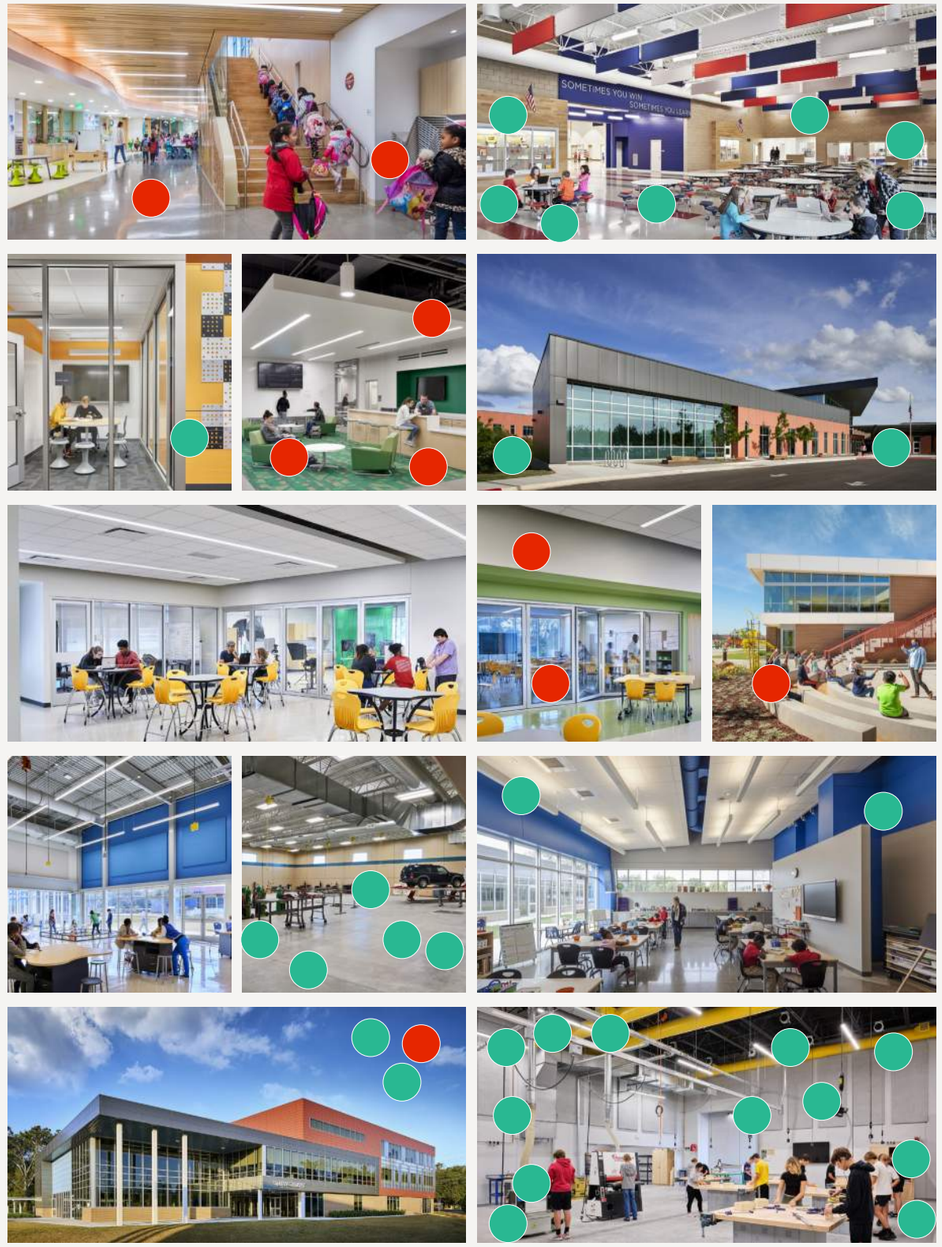
Visioning Photo Exercise

Likes Dislikes



Visioning Photo Exercise

Likes Dislikes



Visioning Photo Exercise

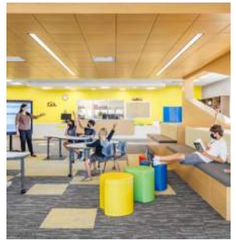
Likes Dislikes





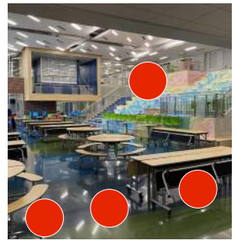
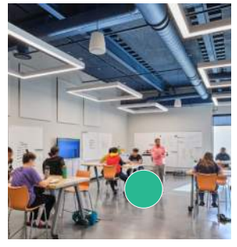


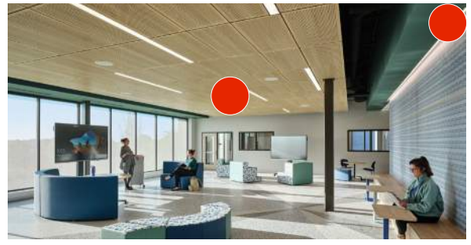


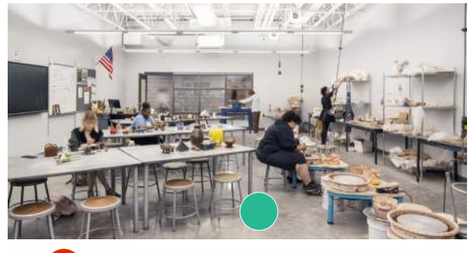


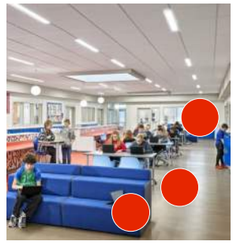
Likes Dislikes

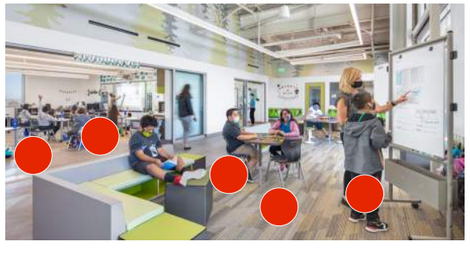


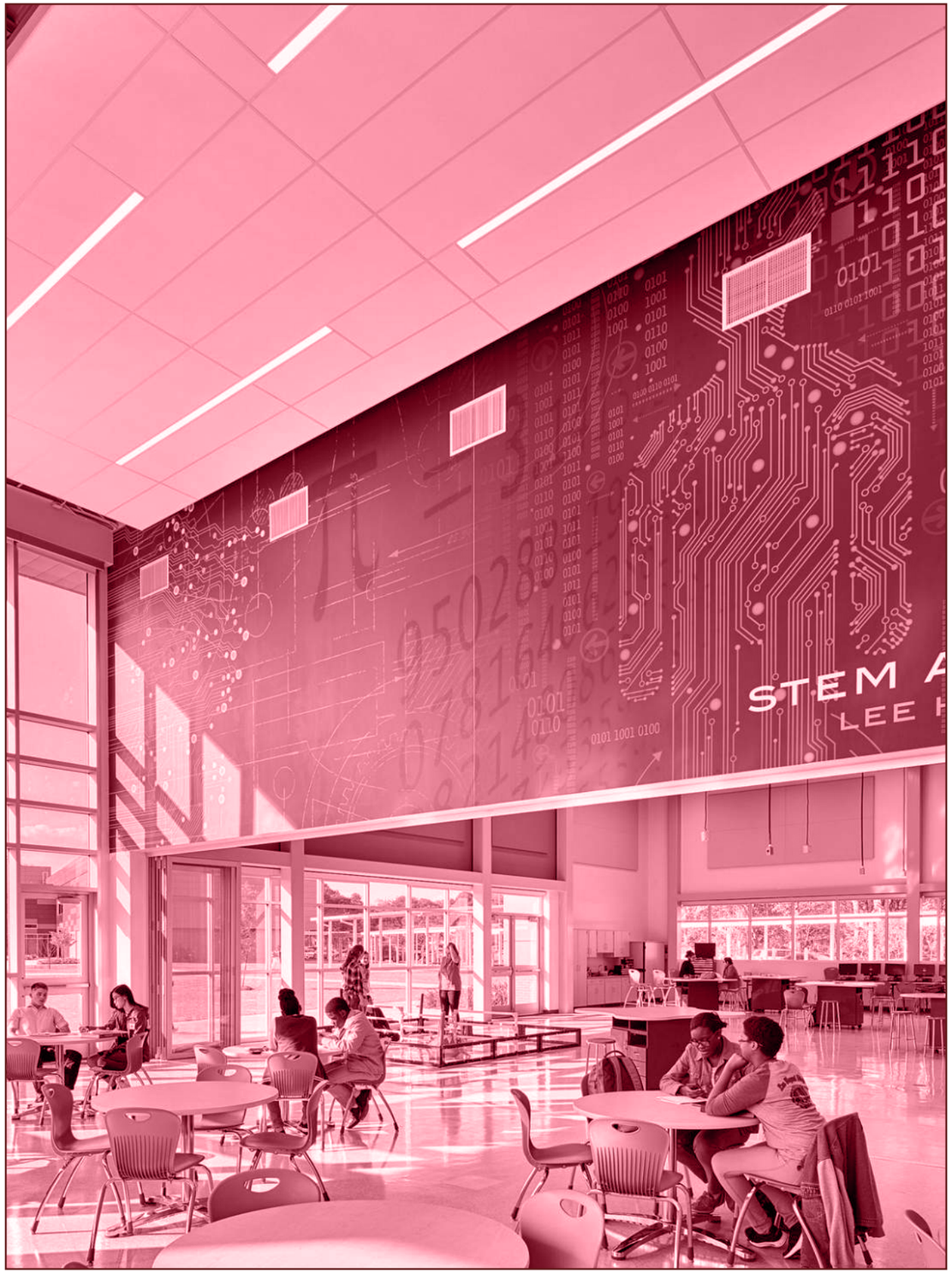









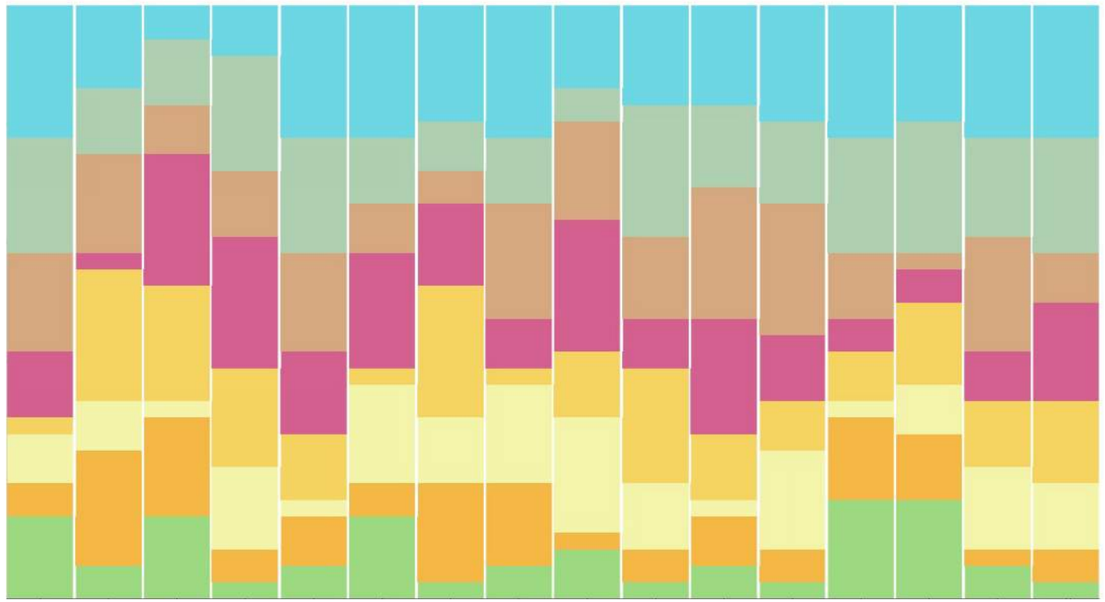


04

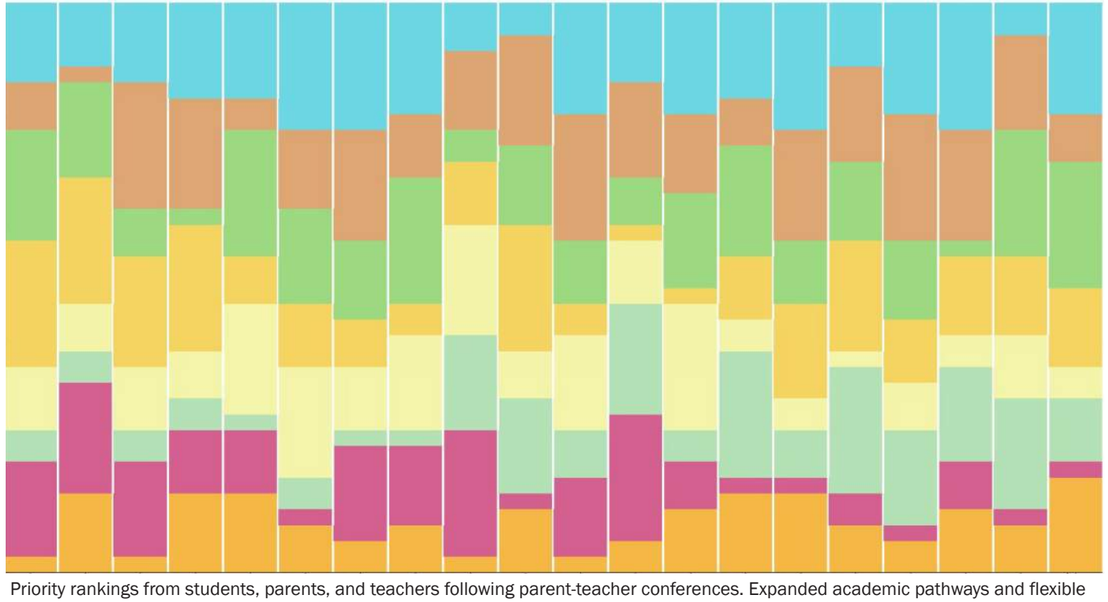
Vision

Participant Priorities

Arlington staff, faculty, parents, and community members were asked to rank their top priorities for the project's overall success to gain a further understanding of the communities needs. Nine unique priorities were provided based on infromation previously gathered from teacher interviews. Each participant ranked the priorities in order from high to low based on the individual's definition of success.



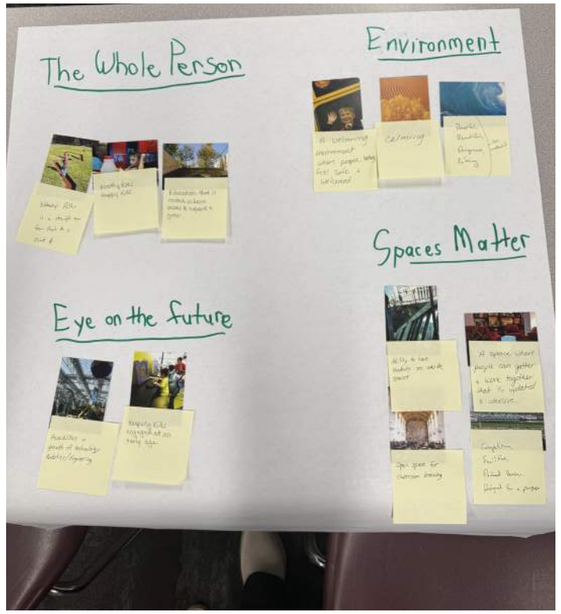
Priority rankings following the first workshop with the community. Expanded academic pathways, ativities entry identity, and flexible learning space ranked as the top three priorities.



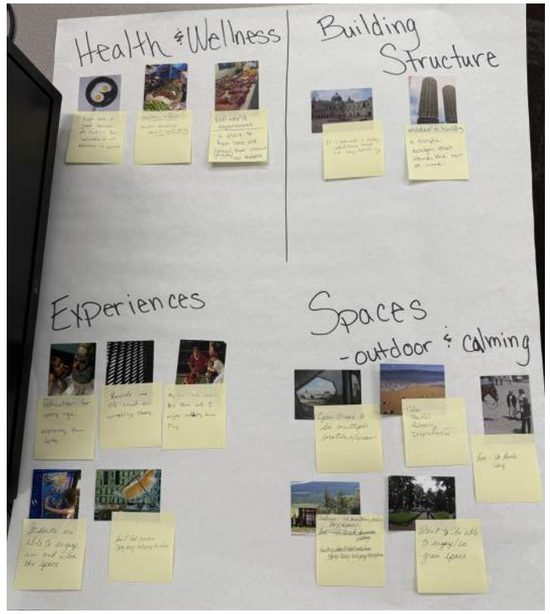
Priority rankings from students, parents, and teachers following parent-teacher conferences. Expanded academic pathways and flexible learning and collaboration space remained in the top three priorities with the addition of parking and site circulation

Guiding Principles

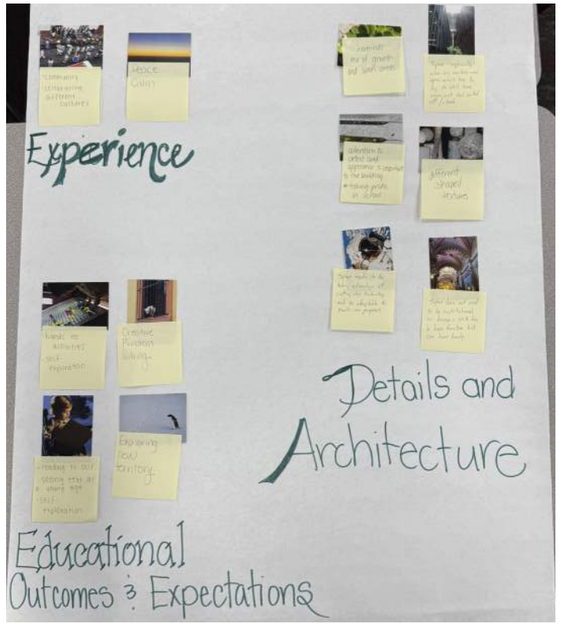
Team 1



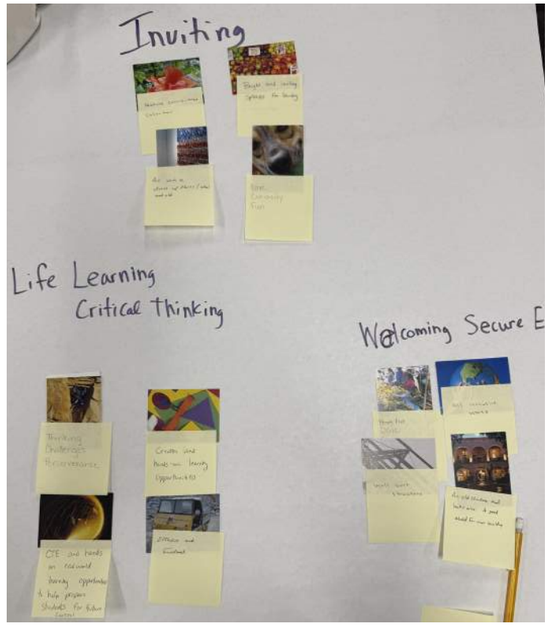
Team 2



Team 3



Team 4



The next activity of the evening was to discuss and begin developing guiding principles of design for Arlington Public Schools. These principles will serve as a filter through which important decisions are made, act as a compass for the project, keep the project on track and should reflect the values of the community. A Picture is Worth 1000 words is the activity that was used to get the data for these principles. Each person selected 3 images out of hundreds presented that spoke to them and identified on a sticky note, why it spoke to them and how it tied to school spaces. Each group then reviewed all their pictures/ sticky notes and categorized them into common themes. The results are listed below as well as the comments on each of the sticky notes.

INVITING

- Nature connection, colorful
- Art used to dress up places, new and old
- Bright and inviting spaces for leaning
- Love, curiosity, fun

LIFE LEARNING AND CRITICAL THINKING

- Thinking, challenges, perseverance
- Creative and hands-on learning opportunities
- CTE and hands-on real-world leaning opportunities to help prepare students for future careers
- Effection and functional

WELCOMING SECURE ENVIRONMENTS

- People feel safe
- Well-built structures
- All-inclusive world
- An old structure that looks nice
- Calming
- A welcoming environemtn where people belong, feel safe and welcomed
- Powerful, beautiful, dangerous, relaxing - we can contradict and still find value

THE WHOLE PERSON

- Nobody's path is a straight one from point A to point B
- Healthy kids, happy kids,
- Education that is rooted in basic values to expand and grow

SPACES MATTER

- Ability to have students see outside spaces
- Open space for classroom learning
- A space where poeple can gather to work together that is updated and cohesive
- Competition, facilities, packed house, designed for a purpose

EYE ON THE FUTURE

- Possibilities in growth of technology, robotics, and engineering
- Keeping kids engaged at an early age

BUILDING STRUCTURE

- It is grounded in history, traditions that are long standing
- Modern buildng with a simple design taht stands the test of time

EXPERIENCES

- Education for every age, exploring the arts
- Students are able to engage in and with the space

SPACES OUTDOOR AND CALMING

- Open areas to see multiple locations
- Calm, peaceful, relaxing, inspirational
- Want to be able to engage/see green space
- Landscape - nature with no electronics

Welcoming and Inclusive: Create environments where every person feels safe, valued, and invited.

Foster Experiential Learning: Design for curiosity, creativity, and hands-on, real-world engagement.

Support Well-Being and Nature Connection: Promote health, calm, and whole-person development through nature-rich, wellness-centered design.

Design with Purpose and Future Vision: Build functional, timeless spaces that are adaptable, innovative, and grounded in community heritage.

I See | We See Statements

I SEE STATEMENTS

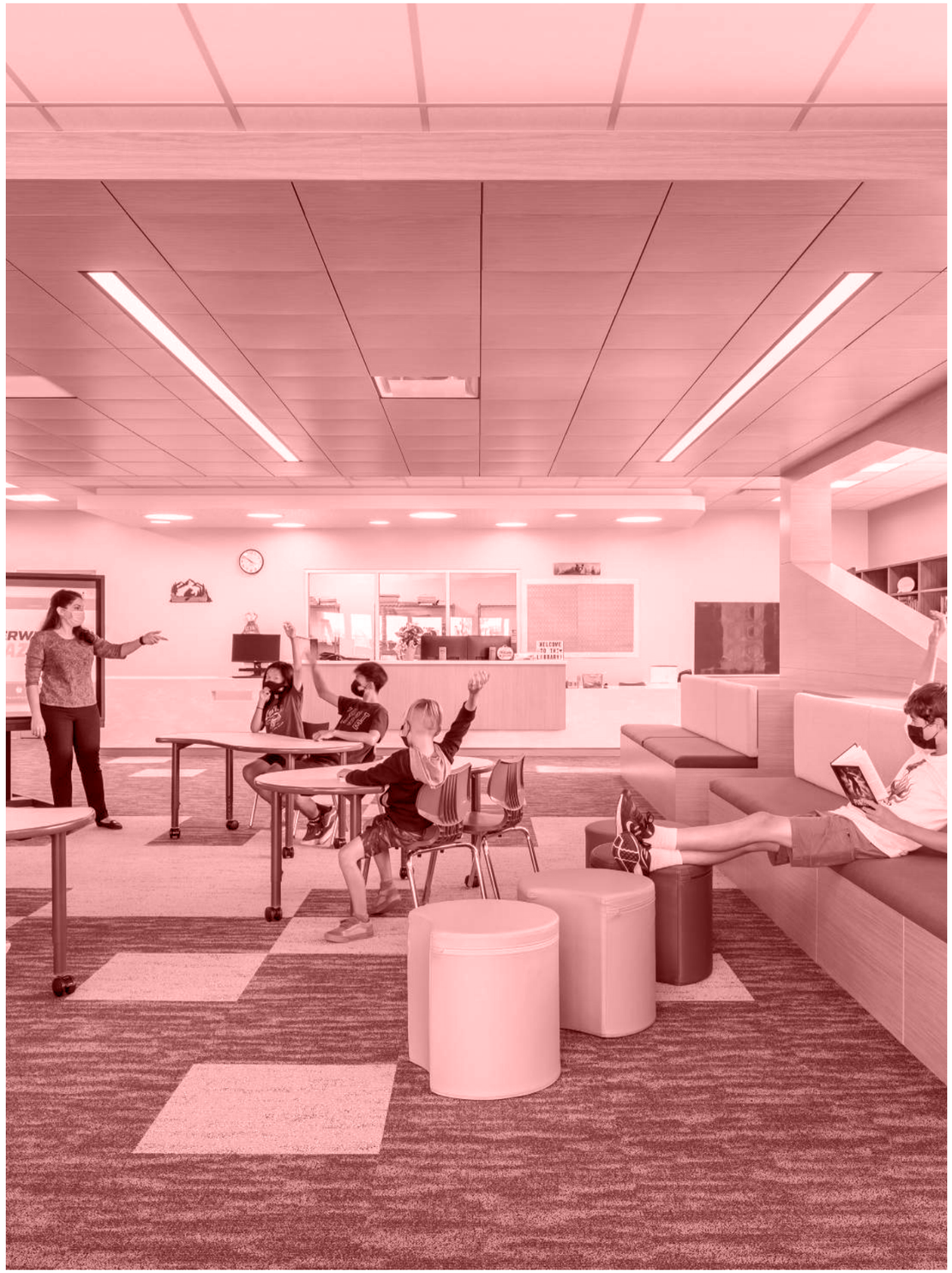
- I see continued growth in size
- I see continued interest in trades and CTE classes
- I see enhanced facilities we are proud of
- I see students who see the value in doing their work, communicating in person, and having a desire to care for and make our world a better place
- I see APS better than similar size schools
- I see a more modern, all inclusive school

WE SEE STATEMENTS

- We see a new building, specifically elementary. A building and student body that is still rural in makeup. We see a building that is open to the community for use.
- We see an improved facility filled with students learning how to appreicte their value. Continued growth and interest in developing real world skills to impact society.
- We see a school that students and the community are proud of. A place that inspires learning, connection and growth where students prepare for their future education and a variety of secondary paths, equipped with the skills and confidence to succeed in an updated and functional space that supports learning, creativity and pride.

We See Statement

We see Arlington Public Schools with modern facilities that stay true to our rural roots—an inviting, community-centered place where students feel valued, build real-world skills, and grow with confidence in a functional, inspiring space.

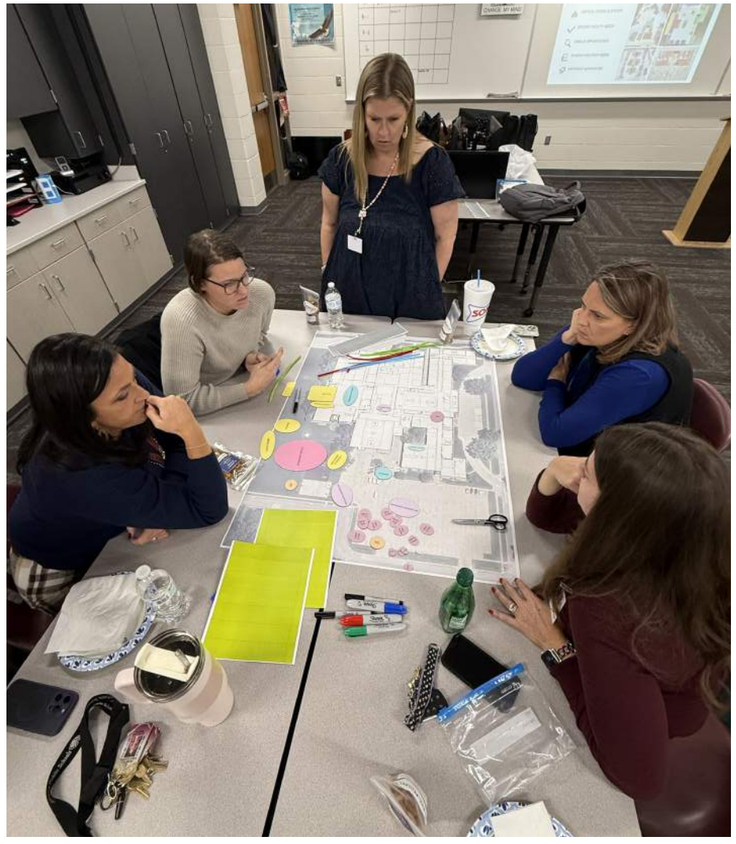


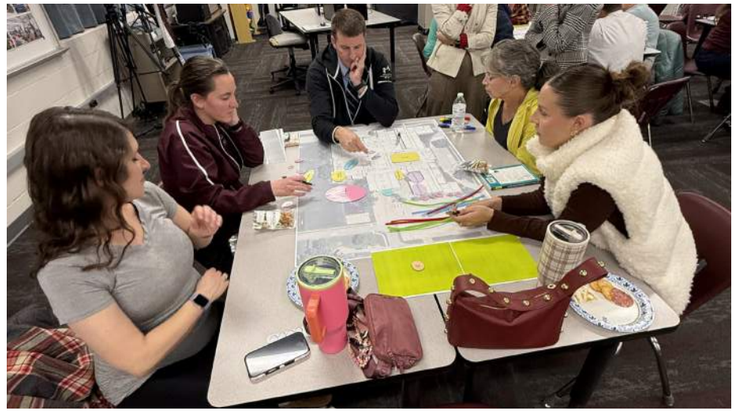
06

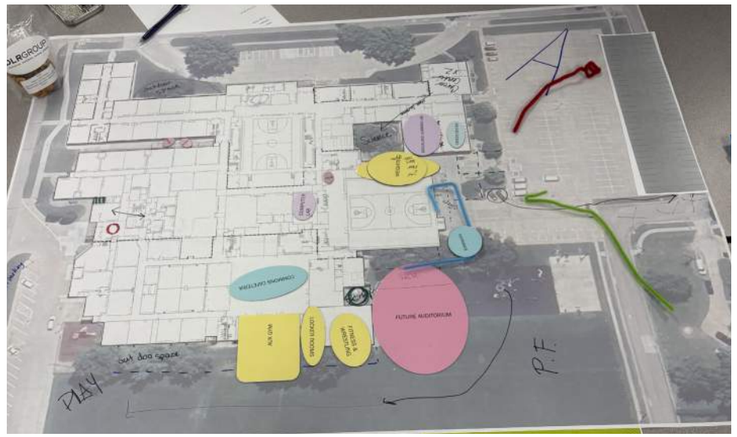
Macro Organization

Design Your Dream School

The Arlington team was supplied with the site plan as well as manipulatives labeled with all the items on the priority list. They were instructed to utilize these pieces and put them on the site where they thought they should be and to make sure to include adjacencies as well as any notes. At the conclusion each group presented to the entire committee and addressed any questions. Each committee member was asked to identify items they liked and did not with each plan and to pick their 2 favorite options







Option A Synthesis

- Option A received positive feedback related to traffic flow, athletics, and CTE improvements, but generated significant concern around moving science rooms.

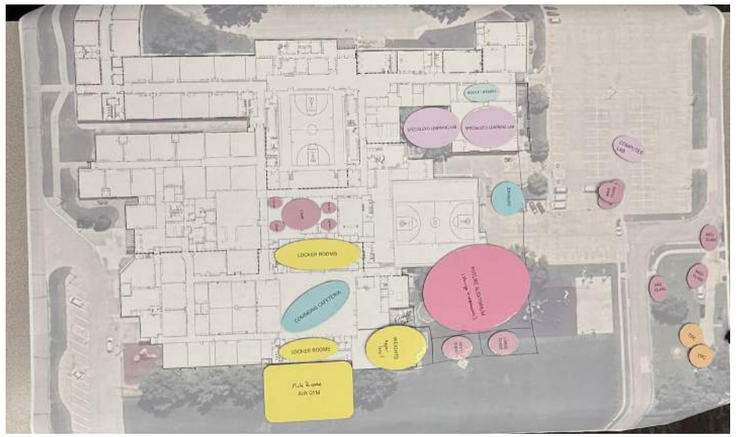
Option B Synthesis

- Option B emerged as the strongest choice, primarily due to its improved auditorium placement, expanded parking, and effective reuse of space.

Option C Synthesis

- Option C, while praised for its elementary classroom expansion, fitness space improvements, and Blue Gym repurposing, was consistently criticized for providing no additional parking and introducing several undesirable academic space shifts.

MACRO ORGANIZATION



DLRGROUP

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