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**Happy Valley Educational Specifications Advisory Committee**

**Workshop 5 Meeting Minutes**

**PROJECT:** Happy Valley Elementary

**PROJECT NUMBER:** 121-14011

**MEETING DATE:** May 27, 2014

**MEETING LOCATION:** Happy Valley Elementary

Members Present:

Anderson, Mike	Holland, Melissa
Angell, Dennis	Howard, Gretchen
Aperule, Tara	Lawyer, Curtis
Baker, Greg	Love, Brian
Brawley, Jackie	Morse, Steve
Cowan, Ron	Moss-Owen, Jamine
D'Hondt, Mike	Prichard, Tony
DeJong, Jill	Rowe, Tanya
Dominguez, Kristi	Rumbaugh, Matt
Flanagan, Kevin	Scherrer, Wendy
Gazow, Kurt	Sterling-Chue, LaVonne
Haberman, Mike	Tolliver, Karen

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Members Absent:

Brawley, Jackie  
Caldwell, Thomas  
Dalton, Mark  
Lin, Ming

**A. Comments on Workshop 4 Meeting Minutes**

No comments or corrections noted.

**B. Classroom Neighborhoods**

1. NAC presented a PowerPoint showing a variety of options of how classrooms might be arranged into groups or neighborhoods around shared collaboration areas. Groupings of classrooms ranged from 3 to 5 per neighborhood.
2. It was noted that with different layouts of neighborhoods there is a different way that the neighborhoods relate to each other as well as different ways the shared areas relate to the classrooms.
3. The group had consensus that the classroom neighborhood similar to what they saw at Riverview was the best option for Happy Valley. This allows for a shared area that is well defined and is not on the circulation path; four classrooms all have

- equal connection to it and the shared area had exterior connection and natural light.
4. A rectangular shaped shared space was preferred as it allows for more wall space for outlets and better use of space for a variety of project activities.
  5. The consensus was that a grouping of 4 classrooms like Riverview was good; this allows for equity to the shared area; it supports collaboration across grade levels and allows for allocation of space for larger shared areas and perhaps larger classrooms.
  6. Preschool need not have a designated shared area though having a close relationship to a shared area was good. A high priority for the preschool is to have it feel included as part of the school. It was noted that maybe Pre-K should be connected to kindergarten for a pod of 5 while other classrooms are in pods of 3 or 4.

### **C. General Design Option Concepts**

NAC Architecture presented 3 main design concepts as well as a variety of variations of those concepts. There were specific comments for each scheme (see section D of these minutes) and there were general comments that applied more broadly to all schemes. Comments that may have been stated during discussion of a specific scheme may be recorded in this section if the comment more broadly addressed issues beyond the specific design.

1. Bus drop-off from 27<sup>th</sup> - there was some discussion about buses using 27<sup>th</sup> as shown on the current plans. A concern was noted that the the road may be too narrow. Comments were made that by removing the buses from 24<sup>th</sup> will significantly improve congestion related to crossing traffic patterns of buses and cars. It was also noted that with only 3 buses it would have minimal disruption on 27<sup>th</sup>. It was noted that this separation of bus and cars is commonly done at schools though it does require added monitoring of 2 points rather than 1. There is no final direction on the bus route though the designers believe it would be on the whole better for the overall traffic congestion issue.
  2. If access is provided from 27<sup>th</sup>, consideration should be given for pedestrian access to school from 27<sup>th</sup> as well as deterring people from cutting across school grounds to 24<sup>th</sup>.
  3. Question if the spaces that comprise the stage, commons and gym need to be as one continuous mass as shown on all options.
  4. Discussed playground being located to the north or south – there is a preference for the play area to be adjacent to the south edge rather than the north edge. However, in exploring design options there are preferences for the classrooms to have southern exposure and placing the gym on the north side of the building. Since the play area works best connected to the gym and commons, that favors placing the playground to the north. This allows for parking on the south and
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arrival to the building without a crossover of students (going to recess) and visitors at the front of the school. It was also noted that the north is higher ground and allows for dryer ground.

5. There should be a designated play area for Preschool.
6. Preschool inclusion is important – this should be considered a Pre-K-5 school.

#### **D. Discussion for each Design Concept**

The following are pros, cons and comments for each of the concepts presented (see attached for drawings of each concept).

1. Concept 1 – “Reaching Out (2)” - this concept developed further design ideas presented previously with modifications responding to previous comments
    - a. Pros
      - + OTPT off shared area is nice
    - b. Cons
      - It was noted that a 5 classroom wing is too big
      - Shared spaces feel less defined
    - c. Comments - general conclusion was this concept could drop out of running
  2. Concept 2 – “Big Tent 2”
    - a. Pros
      - + Like idea that library might be a “signature” for school; a recognizable element that is a unique part of the building composition
      - + Good at including Pre-K
    - b. Cons
      - Shared spaces feel less defined
      - Feels “forced” trying to put things in the middle
    - c. Comments - general conclusion was this concept could drop out of the running
  3. Concept 3 – Community Green
    - a. Pros
      - + Open and welcoming
      - + Like classroom pods/shared areas well defined; fosters independence
      - + Like idea lab up front as signature space
      - + Like that people can see green from all windows
      - + Like garden up front; makes a good statement
      - + Easy access to outdoors from classrooms
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b. Cons

- Need to have interior connection to idea lab
- Concern for heat loss on connector on colder days/overheating on warm days
- Concern for security of courtyard
- Music would be somewhat isolated
- Covered play too far away
- Concern that courtyard would be cold

c. Comments

- Traffic flow in building will need to be thought through to allow for good connection of spaces
- Preferred covered play attached to building

**E. Other General Comments**

1. Like the idea of having some "wow factor" in the building. Also this might be a more "Bellingham wow".
2. Like opportunities for different learning spaces; variety of spaces.
3. Idea lab is an important space not just as computer room but as a place for projects and STEM activities. Drawing skills are important for project and STEM work.
4. Like idea that building creates opportunities for discovery; that you learn just because you are there. The Alhambra (Spain) was noted as a place where the building frames view and capture moments.
5. All ideas and concepts are important, but number one consideration with any design or feature should be the students and thoughtful consideration on learning, as noted in the Bellingham Promise.

**F. Conclusions and Next Steps**

1. The community green was generally well liked. For the next meeting, NAC will return with a more developed version of this as well as a 2<sup>nd</sup> concept that will look to respond differently to the input provided.
  2. Next meeting will be 6/6.
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