

DESIGN GOALS



GENERAL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

As part of a brainstorming exercise, the committee was asked to list the TOP FIVE most important Characteristics, Qualities, and Interests. Asking this question was helpful in beginning a dialogue and providing insight into what may or may not be successful in a redeveloped Birchwood Elementary.

BRAINSTORMING SESSION:

What are the TOP FIVE most important: Characteristics, Qualities, and Interests?

- Accessible in all areas:
 - Physical disabilities
 - Small children
 - Playgrounds
 - Access to “quiet” areas
 - Nurturing
- Nurturing site
- Modern efficient building
- Natural light
- Green building
- Maintainable, don’t create additional work
- Provide for flexibility in technology, design for today and tomorrow
- Historical “flavor” should be maintained
- Existing trees – large collection that represent continents, historical value.
- Neighborhood feels more rural/countrified
- Sustainability is important to the community
- Community Center
 - Fields
 - Walking dogs
 - Garden
 - Easy flow / access around the site
- Primarily a walking school
- Important “outdoor” space
- Community interest center
- Open hours for Library
- Safety and security relative to traffic and site circulation
- Separate student and bus drop-off
- Welcoming for parents and students
- Covered area for student pick-up
- Places to have conversations, gathering points, watering holes



- Size of covered play area – needs to accommodate student population
- PTA
- Community connection
- Encourage conversation/communication
- Relief from the street – frontage
- Should be more “open” rather than creating barrier
- Visibility (security)
- Respect area (neighborhood)
- Public/private separation – provide interior separation, but exterior facilities be accessible to all
- Unite neighborhood – rural, countrified, transient, urban
- Provide good accommodations for special ed services
- Meet the needs of the Birchwood students
- Small group areas
- Accommodate a variety of needs
- Consider preschool program
- Facilitate “bonding” within various neighborhood groups
- Library should be centrally located
- Office should be centralized
- Provide adequate space for movement at the early learner’s stage
- Early learners need to be located close to services
- Flow is important! Moving students from one place to another should be easy

Following the Brainstorming session, the discussion was defined to develop goals and visions for the project:

SITE

- Make site very accessible for use by the community
- The ability to use the church parking lot
- Accommodate staff and event parking
- Community walks to special events
- A real community place: no separation of public/private – accessible to all
- Need separation inside of building
- Prominent entry – parents/students know where to go
- Community garden is very important to everyone
 - Outdoor learning space
 - Produces food for neighborhood families
 - Relaxing space for EBD
 - Historical significance of garden (history of feeding coal miner kids w/garden)
 - Used as part of educational program



BUILDING IMAGE

- Welcoming
- It should fit into the neighborhood – materials and scale of building
- Promote green building
- Sense of entry
- Modern efficient, respond to the needs of students today

TEACHER AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Quality of light and sound -bright light and echoes affect special learning
- Light control
- Terrestrial views – connection to the exterior
- Functional layout
- Flexibility
- Versatility / quality of space
- Ability to exit directly to the exterior of the building
- Flow and circulation – focus on the adjacencies and length of hallways
- Small group activity off of learning communities
- Classrooms should be adjacent to the flex spaces – limit disruption from circulation
- Special services should be adjacent to general classrooms and flex spaces
- Teaching wall at front of room with flexibility on the ancillary walls

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

- A special needs space should have structure that accommodates a swing in a classroom setting
- Classrooms should accommodate for more than one teacher teaching at one time (small group learning)
- Doors between classrooms to support collaboration
- Operable partitions not necessary/desired – sound translation is a concern
- Moveable walls are not maintenance friendly
- Space for 4-5 specialists
- Collaboration of “one school house”
- More tackable surfaces
- Don’t carpet entire room for the young learners, need hard surfaces for clean ability
- More book shelves
- Furniture should accommodate different sizes of children
- Have the ability to separate technology as a distraction in small group flex spaces
- Size of classrooms – larger at the higher grade levels to accommodate size
- Options for outdoor meeting/playing – smaller more intimate spaces
- Be aware of vandalism in selecting materials
- How many electrical drops in a classroom?



- Technology will be flexible – wireless environment
- Question will be where devices (tablets) are stored, not how many electrical drops
- Computer labs are restricted by having only one use
- Teaching station flexibility
- Less built in hard devices
- Whole group, small group, individual – technology needs to support this
- Two classrooms side by side in hallway, which reduces the amount of hallway length
- Visibility
- Large group space (Cafeteria) needs to accommodate full student population
- Music room needs to have the ability to be separated from cafeteria to be used in conjunction
- Acoustics important in break-out spaces
- Give special consideration to the amount of meals served (breakfast/lunch/dinner)
- Circular tables in the cafeteria to support interaction
- Learning styles – quiet areas for over sensory students
- Need to accommodate sensory motor issues – calm down room
 - Sporadic alcoves, etc.
 - Trampoline / energy ball room
- Quiet space within classrooms
- Provide flexible space to accommodate autism spectrum
- Rooms for 8-10 for title 1 program – multiuse spaces
- The Wood Hood
- Warm Modern ‘pacific nw style’



DESIGN GOALS AND KEYS TO DESIGN

GOAL: BIRCHWOOD ELEMENTARY IS A NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

The school should express the central qualities of warmth and welcome, stability, and the importance of the school's place in the community. Design and appearance should suggest a timeless quality, emphasizing the seriousness of the school's educational mission and commitment to students. It should promote and respond to the needs of the students, emphasizing a feeling of well-being and safety.

KEYS TO DESIGN:

- The site should be accessible for use by the community and serve as a focal point for a diverse community.
- The design needs to meet the unique needs of the Birchwood students.
- The building needs to support and encourage casual conversation.
- The site should accommodate a community garden.
- The building should be accessible to all.
- The building should present a welcoming presence and avoid creating barriers to the community.
- The building should be modern, efficient, and respond to the needs of today's students.
- Birchwood is a walking school, keep the site pedestrian friendly.
- Bus/car separation
 - Separate teacher and visitor parking
 - Separate bus and parent drop-off



DESIGN GOALS AND KEYS TO DESIGN

GOAL: PROVIDE A QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

A elementary school should welcome students, staff, and community by providing an attractive, secure, comfortable, well-organized and user-friendly environment to all who enter the school.

KEYS TO DESIGN:

- Provide good natural light that can be controlled.
- The design should provide terrestrial views – connection to the exterior.
- Special care should be given to controlling sound levels.
- Flow and circulation – focus on adjacencies and length of path of travel to spaces.
- Versatility – there needs to be spaces that accommodate all aspects of learning
 - Quiet space
 - Sensory
 - Sporadic alcoves
- Pull-out spaces should be adjacent to classrooms to limit disruption that occurs from circulation.
- Promote green building
- Consider locating the playground near the main office.



DESIGN GOALS AND KEYS TO DESIGN

GOAL: THE DESIGN NEEDS TO SUPPORT THE EDUCATIONAL GOALS OF THE SCHOOL AND THE DISTRICT

A elementary school should accommodate equitable access to a wide range of educational programs, services and activities designed to ensure each student's success in school and preparation for further educational experiences. The characteristics of the educational spaces should support the goals of high performing schools.

KEYS TO DESIGN:

- The design should support a “one school house” approach to teaching and learning.
- The furniture and classroom size should accommodate student size.
- The design needs to support today’s and tomorrow’s technology – flexibility.
- The design needs to support today’s and tomorrow’s elementary programs, some which we don’t ever know about – flexibility.
- Provide good accommodations for special education services.
- The library and administration should be centrally located.
- Provide adequate space for movement at the early learner’s stage.
- Outdoor learning – community garden
- Teaching station location needs to be flexible.
- Self-contained classrooms should be integrated with general classrooms.
- The design should enable the staff to arrange individualized instruction; small, intermediate and large-group instruction; and whole-school gatherings.
- The cafeteria should be large enough to accommodate the school’s enrollment in two to three lunch periods.
- Classroom technology placements should allow flexibility in configuration.

**DESIGN GOALS AND KEYS TO DESIGN*****GOAL: THE SCHOOL SHOULD SUPPORT COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AND FACILITATE COMMUNICATION***

A elementary school should be an inviting, highly personalized learning community that supports academic success and facilitates communication, collaboration and team-building through its ability to support diverse educational programs and activities.

KEYS TO DESIGN:

- There should be a large space that accommodates events and performances.
- Provide options for outdoor meeting/playing that are smaller and more intimate.
- Provide for communication between classrooms through the use of doors.
- Provide spaces to have conversations, gathering points, watering holes.
- Direct connection to the exterior from the classrooms with visibility.
- Give special consideration to the servery and the amount of meals per day – support sharing by the use of circular tables.
- Project pull out spaces should be located adjacent to classroom clusters to support student projects and instructional activities.
- Classrooms should include doors at the common walls that facilitate team planning.