

West Seattle Elementary School Renovation and Addition SCHOOL DESIGN ADVISORY TEAM

Workshop #2: Educational Specifications & Foundations for Equity

Date: 10/09/2019

Attendees: Pam McCowan-Conyers Principal
Sahnica Washington Assistant Principal
Kyle Tunstall Teacher
Phil Sweetland Volunteer
Nardos Yohannis Student
Abdi Ali Social Worker
Lisa Enriquez Bilingual IA
Saeda Hirsi Parent
Paul Wight Project Manager, SPS Capital Projects
Deborah Northern Racial Equity Advancement Coordinator, SPS
Brad Miller Principal, Miller Hayashi Architects
Laura Maman Principal, Miller Hayashi Architects
Amanda Anderson Professional Staff, Miller Hayashi Architects
Hanna Lirman Professional Staff, Miller Hayashi Architects

TEAM SCRAPBOOK

The team reviewed and discussed the images contributed by team members after the first meeting. Strong themes in common were noticed including transparency between spaces, use of color and abundant natural light. As we looked at the slides team comments included:

- A variety of conversation spaces
- Sightlines with glass
- Natural light
- Glass and sunlight used to connect old and new
- Daylight into hallway from classrooms through relites
- Light is a common theme
- Move away from an institutional feeling
- Color
- Playful lighting
- Stair doubling as an amphitheater
- Vision for principal's office: an office space that's separated with glass but within a larger space that would house other leadership members - WSE has a unique shared leadership team.
- An improved waiting area outside of the office
- Being welcomed in your own first language makes a difference
- A new exterior school exterior sign was never put in after name change.

TEAM DISCUSSION OF SPS EQUITY POLICY

Deborah Northern, the Program Coordinator for the Department of Racial Equity Advancement, introduced the SPS Board Policy for Ensuring Educational and Racial Equity.

Deborah noted that all BEX V projects will have an equity focus from the onset of the project. SPS is focused on building for ALL students: Excellence is inherent in each child. Buildings should be intentionally designed for a variety of interactions and should have welcoming, inviting environments. Built space for partnerships, recognizing diversity, and creating multiple pathways for success are all important aspect of this effort. Members of the SDAT team should feel free to contact Deborah directly with any questions or additional discussion, dnorthern@seattleschools.org.

Team member comments included:

Students and their circumstances do have an impact on the design of the building, keep those circumstances in the forefront while forming a design strategy.

Team members pointed out that the developmental preschool program currently serves students that typically go on to attend other schools. WSES would like to see that space serve the pre-K needs of the WSES student community, particularly given the importance of Early Learning to later educational success.

SDAT team members asked about the school capacity projections. How is the size of the addition determined? Answer: Through projected growth in the service area developed by the SPS demographer. 464 students are enrolled at WSES this year, including Head Start and Developmental Pre-K.

Team members noted the ongoing densification in the neighborhood including new housing right next door to the school. How long is the current expansion expected to meet the needs? Concern is if another expansion project is needed in the near future will mean another disruption in the WSES programs.

If school boundary change is a strategy as a response to growth that should lead to greater diversity at WSES, right now the school is focused: 70% of enrollment is East African families who reside in the nearby SHA community.

TEAM DISCUSSION OF EDUCATIONAL SPECIFICATIONS AND SITE SPECIFIC MODIFICATIONS

Laura described the intent of the SPS Educational Specifications is to create a consistent template across the district for state of the art educational programming. Laura presented diagrams illustrating the SPS 500 Student Elementary School Educational Specification spaces and the current space allocation at WSES. The School Board approves a Site Specific Educational Specification with any site specific modification proposed to accommodate unique aspects of the school.

A second set of diagrams was presented comparing the current WSES space allocations to the space allocations proposed by the BEX V and Classroom Capacity Reduction improvements. This project creates enough classrooms to house the 500 student Ed Spec but does not include expanding Student Dining or Gym. Working from poster

boards illustrating the team's goals and priorities identified at the first SDAT meeting, the team brainstormed ideas that would help translate these goals into school improvements at West Seattle. These included:

Admin area should accommodate the school's approach to shared leadership. Principal Office should be arranged with visibility to a shared meeting area where head teachers, grade level leaders, and others can collaborate. Inspiration from the photo of the Innovation Center with lots of glass and open collaboration areas.

Mr. Ali, the school social worker, often interacts with parents and families. His office should be close to the main entrance and the food pantry area, and should be nearby the parent meeting area so that parents waiting for their appointment have a place to sit.

In the morning, students wait outside the main entrance until doors are unlocked. They should be able to wait under cover.

A new covered area at the entry could provide a place for parents to meet up and wait, could add a new look to the old portion of the building.

Improvements to after-school pick up area with clarified pick up zones and some kind of signage. Pick-up is mostly parents arriving at the school on foot and then walking home or back to cars parked outside of the school site. Each classroom waits with their teacher for parents to pick them up. The signs marking the pick-up zones for each classroom could use improvement. Currently, signs are laminated paper zip-tied to the fence.

Additional parking at the school is desired by neighbors. The existing parking lot has 44 spaces plus a 3-car loading zone. Cars don't use the bus lane during pickup and drop off times.

Visibility to a new entrance canopy from the west is important. It should have consistent appearance with the new addition and could also look similar to a covered area at the west for pick up.

The new entrance area should include 'welcome' in multiple languages.

New school signage is important for school identity. Some of the interior signage still says 'High Point'. The SDAT is in favor of an electronic message type sign. (SDCI zoning would require a departure for this.)

Team members explained that parents often meet and talk to each other in hallways. It's great that parents are interacting but it can be noisy and disruptive. Ideally parents should have a comfortable meeting place near the entrance where they can have conversations. This could boost the volunteerism among parents. It will make parents feel welcome.

Size of the meeting space for parent meetings is too small. Serving food is important at group gatherings.

Size of the food pantry – need room for back packs

Acoustics in the Student Dining need to be improved.

One student/teacher priority is a separate theater space for assemblies. It takes a lot of time to set up furniture in the lunch room. (would new convertible tables help?)

STEAM emphasis: the idea of the building as a teaching tool – the ability to see some of the ‘workings’ of the school systems through windows.

SDAT Team Responses to Design Team’s Questions:

Identify rooms needed for counseling & social work - are they centralized near entry or dispersed in Classroom pods?

Counseling space should be in a calming space for parents, near but not right at front entry, near food pantry, restrooms, parent meeting space.

Describe what the Food Pantry needs - what should that area be like?

Space for food deliveries.

Backpack program: 50 backpacks for pickup.

Adjacent to parent meeting space.

If we thought of a “Family Commons” what would that look like/contain? Like a Learning Commons near entrance area where family members can connect and find resources.

Resource center for parent use, computers for job search, resume writing, GED support.

Space for presentations.

Need a space for younger children coming with parents - childwatch during parent events.

Parent Tea takes place in the library in the evening and in Room 107 during the day – usually 10 to 30 people.

Review the needs of the school nurse and cot area specific to WSES

Space for the mobile dental program, currently once a year in Room 107.

Currently there is an exam room staffed by Neighborcare – need to keep space for that.

Where do the Husky Club, Parent Tea, and PAWS parties happen?

They happen in gym and student dining. Student leadership meetings are held in a classroom.

Entrance Canopy Visible from the Streets

Yes! See discussions above.

Kindergarten Play Structure on north side?

Strong desire for separate play area for youngest children.

For safety.

Covered area for outdoor play in wet weather.

Paul Wight explained that there will be a Play Structure Committee as the design process moves forward.

Ideas for a School Garden

Shelter for outdoor learning, Roof garden?

What are most important improvements for the library?

Hub that is focused on reading.

Provide for group events/meetings.

MASTER PLAN TEST-TO-FIT

Laura explained that Miller Hayashi sketched a 'test-to-fit' plan that shows how the 650 student Ed Spec could be constructed at the West Seattle site. The purpose is to make sure the current project doesn't block the best options. Two options for expanded gym and student commons space were presented. Laura asked for input from the team about the preferred location of these activities.

In a place-the-dot exercise the group solidly preferred Option A showing the gym expanding into the adjacent student commons space at the first floor level with a new student commons addition at the second floor (playground level).

Preserving these options will be taken into consideration as the design develops.

NEXT STEPS: SCHOOL TOUR

Schools for the team to visit and why:

To get a feel for a recent brand new Elementary School built to meet the SPS Ed Spec: Genesee Hill Elementary

To get a feel for a recent renovation & addition 'capacity' project similar in scope: Magnolia, Queen Anne Elementary Schools

To visit a recent school with a mission to welcome a diverse community: World School

Things to look for when touring (take pictures!):

School entrance – how to make it welcoming and also address student safety
Learning Commons - different approaches to the use and layout of learning spaces

Daylight & Transparency - how to improve daylight and transparency in remodeled spaces

END OF MINUTES

The foregoing minutes represent the architect's understanding of discussions held and decisions reached in the meeting and constitute the formal record of this meeting. Meeting participants with amendments to these minutes should provide comments to the architect within five working days of the transmittal date.