

Northgate Elementary School Design Advisory Team - Meeting #3 -Workshop

Meeting Date: November 12, 2019

In Attendance: *~~strikethrough~~ means did not attend

Eric Becker, Seattle Public Schools

Vince Gonzales, Seattle Public Schools

Kristi Jones, Seattle Public Schools

Amy Kopiloff

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Laura Root

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Dedy Fautleroy, Northgate ES Principal

Kevin Flannigan, NAC Architecture

Matt Rumbaugh, NAC Architecture

Amy Jain, NAC Architecture

Boris Srdar, NAC Architecture

Giselle Altea, NAC Architecture

Emily Spillar, NAC Architecture

Discussion Items

1.0 Recap of the School Tours.

Team members shared their thoughts regarding the various schools visited on November 6. Comments listed below do not necessarily represent the views of the whole group.

Olympic Hills

- Interesting exterior space under the stairs
- Pods felt very separated: dead ends, no vertical integration, no flow or connections
- Sliding doors from library didn't really seem to have a function
- OT/PT was located far from other classrooms - would result in more lost instructional time
- Locations of the various spaces didn't feel intentional
- Wish the library felt more conducive to reading
- Overheard Olympic Hills staff say that the office spaces were cramped
- Felt like there were missed opportunities in the design
- Like the fact that some classrooms had doors directly to the outside
- The childcare suite with its own entrance seemed very well thought-out

Tambark Creek

- Nice vertical connections created by the stairs in the pods
- Many members said they liked the classroom layouts in the school the best of those toured. Liked the window nooks, the varied ceiling heights, the sliding doors between adjacent classrooms.
- Liked the feel of the pods and shared learning areas
- Most members did not like the library. Awkward layout, low ceiling.



- Some members were concerned that the learning stair in the center of the building might not be used very often and might be hazardous for the students.
- Gym & commons felt very institutional.
- Some concern that the population served by the school is very different from Northgate's
- Good daylighting in the pods
- Nooks and cozy corners are great for tutoring

Stevens Creek

- Really liked the pod spaces
- Nice furniture
- Color scheme helped it feel homey, organic and less institutional
- Nice woodwork and details
- Special Ed spaces were great, but not currently being used for special ed.
- Maker Space at the front of the school was great – loved the visibility it brought to the activities
- Loved the curved hallways - not a dead end and not a straight line.
- Elegant exterior materials
- Some people loved the library, others weren't as excited.

General Conversation and Takeaways from the tours

- Dedy felt like the learning commons spaces were too big in some of the schools
- A long hallway can be ok if it is curved and has multiple exit points
- Mixed feelings about having classrooms grouped in pods by grade – concerns about how to adapt when enrollment numbers fluctuate

2.0 Overview of NAC Research on unique needs of homeless students

- Northgate Elementary has a high percentage of homeless and transient students
- How can school facilities support the challenges of student homelessness?

Key Points from NAC's research:

- Need to make provisions for supporting students' basic needs – food, clothing, laundry
 - It is only when a child has had their basic needs met that they can truly learn and grow.
- Need to remove stigma surrounding homelessness
- Importance of transparency for a sense of safety.
- Importance of considering privacy versus communal arrangements in the space organization
- Importance of creating the emotional and physical feeling of 'home'.
- Need to consider how students personal possessions are accommodated
 - Homeless and transient children often bring everything they own to school with them. As this can be the only thing in their lives that they have control over, maintaining that sense of control is critical to feelings of safety.
- Key spaces that need particular consideration when designing for homeless students:



- Kitchen for families to prepare food and for teaching/ learning about food preparation
- A 'family room'
- Spaces of refuge
- Individualized spaces
- Yards/ Garden/ Nature
- Space for project based learning

Team discussion regarding homelessness and other student challenges at Northgate:

- Importance of growing and cooking food together
 - Also important / helpful for students with other challenges too
- Need a place where a new family can have a private conversation with staff
- The neighborhood is very transitional – few kids stay at Northgate all the way from kindergarten to 5th grade.
- Northgate students need the school to be like a community center. It essentially functions this way already, but doesn't have the spaces and facilities to really support that role.
- Large ELL population requires lots of props in the classrooms – don't currently have adequate space to store these.
- Need options and flexibility
- The Nurse's space is very important
- The new school needs to accommodate future changes – be flexible

3.0 Design Principles and Priorities for the new Northgate building

- School Motto is 'Courage, Compassion, Connection"
 - The last is probably the most important.
 - Community should be the theme of the school
 - Building needs to enhance this sense of community
- Non-Institutional feel
- Create an exceptional tapestry of spatial choices
 - Provide a high quality, varied architectural experience
- Mitigate the challenges of scale
 - The new school will house 2.5 times as many students as are currently enrolled

4.0 Site Analysis

- New building will be built on the North end of the site – where the current grass playfield and asphalt play yards are located.
- The site consists of two fairly level 'terraces'; a 12 foot tall retaining wall currently forms the boundary between the two. The upper terrace will be the primary location for the new building, but part of the building could step down to the lower terrace.
- The new play areas will be located where the current building sits, and will be constructed after the current building is demolished.
- There could potentially be views of the city skyline and Mt. Rainier from the second floor of the new building.



- New building entry will probably be on 1st avenue but could also be located on 120th Street.
- There numerous established trees around the perimeter of the site. 4 of these trees meet the city's criteria for 'Exception' trees.

5.0 Presentation of Preliminary design schemes

Scheme A

Features

- Building entry on 1st Avenue
- Two story classroom wing with small 3-classroom pods arranged along either side of an East-West running hallway.
- Small courtyard spaces in between the pods
- Gym and Commons located on lower terrace

Comments

- People liked the proportions of the Gym and Commons
- Liked the small 'library' spaces distributed throughout the building
- The spaces overall felt less connected than in the other schemes
- Fewer classrooms per pod could lead to less flexibility
- This was the least favorite scheme for the group

Scheme B

Features

- Building entry on 1st avenue
- Two story classroom wing with larger asymmetric 6-classroom pods extending to the south
- Classroom pods open to courtyards facing the line of large established trees on the South West property line.
- Gym located on upper terrace adjacent to 120th street; Commons located on lower terrace

Comments

- Team members liked the stairs in the pods that create vertical connectivity between the two floors
- Liked the classroom views across the green space/ courtyards
- Interesting geometry
- Gym is located too close to 120th street.
- Would prefer to have gym and commons on same level and connected.

Scheme C

Features

- Building Entry on 1st Avenue
- Floor plan with classroom groupings that are less 'pod-like' and more open to the central shared use / circulation space
- 2 story library space – can look down into library from level 2.
- Curving interior walls and hallways



- Gym and Commons located on lower terrace

Comments

- Team members liked that the hallway is not a straight line
- Liked the distributed reading nooks and smaller shared areas
- Liked that there is potential to have doors between classrooms
- This scheme offers a lot of flexibility to mix grade levels and adjust groupings when enrollment fluctuates
- Liked the library connection to level 2
- Liked the curves and the flow

If there are any corrections to these minutes, please notify the Architect within (7) days of receipt.
Prepared by AJ.

