

## MEETING MINUTES

Project	Mercer Int'l Middle School	Project No	2002
Subject	SDAT Meeting #1	Meeting Date	2/23/2021
From	Bassetti Architects	Date	2/25/2021

### Attending

+ Attended in person

\* Attended by Phone

x Did not Attend

* Brad Tong Managing Director	Shiels Oblatz Johnson	* Cheri Hendricks Educational Planner	Broadview Associates
* Justine Kim Project Manager	Shiels Oblatz Johnson	* Lorne McConachie Educational Planner	Bassetti Architects
* Paige McGehee Program Coordinator	Shiels Oblatz Johnson	* Caroline Lemay Principal in Charge	Bassetti Architects
* Jerome Hunter Founder of Seattle School for Boys	Partnered with SOJ	* Michael Davis Design Principal	Bassetti Architects
* Vince Gonzales Senior Project Manager	Seattle Public School	* Amanda Clausen Project Manager	Bassetti Architects
* Deborah Northern Equity and Engagement Manager	Seattle Public School	* Edward Arreola Project Designer	Bassetti Architects
* Sarah Prichett Executive Director	Seattle Public School	* Cindy Watters Mercer Principal	Mercer Int'l Middle School
* Sherrie Encarnacion Mercer Assist. Principal	Mercer Int'l Middle School	* Katie Humphreys SpEd Teacher	Mercer Int'l Middle School
* Aaron Hennings Music Teacher	Mercer Int'l Middle School	* Sue Monroe Librarian	Mercer Int'l Middle School
* Janet Bautista Science and STEM Teacher	Mercer Int'l Middle School	* Emily Elasky Science and STEM Teacher	Mercer Int'l Middle School
* Matt Kochevar Teacher	Mercer Int'l Middle School	* Virginia Andrews School Counselor	Mercer Int'l Middle School
* Katie Badillo Wright Teacher	Mercer Int'l Middle School	* Tracy Kolner Attendance Specialist	Mercer Int'l Middle School
* Azi Brannock Student	Mercer Int'l Middle School	* Logan Neil Student	Mercer Int'l Middle School

* Rumi Takahashi Parent	Mercer Int'l Middle School	* Erin Okuno Parent	Mercer Int'l Middle School
x Grace Floyd Parent	Mercer Int'l Middle School		

## Notes

This was the first SDAT (School Design Advisory Team) Meeting for the Mercer Int'l Middle School Project. Statewide restrictions to “stay home” in an effort to combat the spread of COVID-19 had us use videoconferencing to conduct this meeting. These notes do not substitute for the contents of the presentation; rather they supplement it by capturing context and comments made during the meeting, so please reference page numbers within the presentation.

### 1. WELCOME, AGENDA, AND INTRODUCTIONS

- + Michael Davis welcomed the group to our first SDAT meeting. He gave an overview of today's agenda. (page 1)
- + Cheri introduced the Seattle Public School, Shiels Obletz Johnson (SOJ), and Bassetti team. (page 2)
- + Vince asked each member of the SDAT to say hello. (page 3)
- + Vince welcome and thanked all members and spoke to the District's memo about keeping these meetings a safe place to express ideas, listen to one another, and be inclusive. Anyone who violates this will be asked to leave. (page 4)
- + Michael Davis introduced the Goals for Today. This was to outline what we hoped to accomplish with the meeting. This included: (page 5)
  - o Understand the purpose, roles, and timeline for this SDAT
  - o Understand the general parameters for the SDAT process
  - o Introduce the Strategic Plan and Equity Priorities
  - o Begin to develop Site-Specific Goals for the project
  - o Understand the opportunities and constraints of the Mercer Int'l Middle School facility and site.

### 2. SCHOOL DESIGN ADVISORY TEAM (SDAT) ORIENTATION

- + Amanda walked through the timeline for the project. She identified where we are currently at with our SDAT process, what the next steps and phase would be, and our target end date. She also explained how the Landmarks process overlays onto this. (page 6-7)
  - o Cheri clarified that if the project does not get Landmark designation then we can do all new construction.
  - o We will hopefully know by June if any parts of the existing building will be Landmarked.
- + Cheri described what the role of an SDAT member entails. These include: (page 8)
  - o Provide input on the visions and goals for Mercer Int'l Middle School. Describe what is unique about your school and ensure diverse perspectives are being represented.
  - o Evaluate design options presented by the design team.
  - o Make recommendations that align with the Strategic Plan, Racial Equity Policy, the SPS Guiding Principles for Design, and the Project Budget.
  - o Communicate key decision to your constituencies
- + Cheri described the typical ground rules for the SDAT process. These include: (page 9)
  - o Be respectful
  - o Value differences

- Cooperate and share information
  - Bring suggestions and alternatives
  - Keep commitments
  - Listen to others
  - Revisit issues/decisions only if new information surfaces
  - And have fun!
- + Cheri asked if there are other ground rules, we should identify to place them in the Chat.
  - No additional comments were identified.
- + Cheri described general parameters for the SDAT and project. Like a river with multiple tributaries, our process involves many different parameters to coordinate with. Some of these include: (page 10)
  - SPS Strategic Plan
  - SPS Racial Equity Policy 0030
  - SPS District-Wide Educational Specification
  - Mercer Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP)
  - Green Resolution and other Energy saving measures
  - Technical Building Standards
  - Landmark Reviews
- + It is the goal of the design team to look at all these factors as well as your input to create a building that meets the District and Community goals.
- + Deborah Northern reviewed the SPS Strategic Plan and it's focus on racial equity. (Page 11 and a separate presentation [https://rise.articulate.com/share/U0gjF0TV6V0HWLjDnoHWeYpGXbFOwvpv4#/\) 
  - She gave an overview of the District's commitment to racial equity and anti-racism as outlined in the Seattle Excellence Strategic Plan.
  - SPS is committed to the success of each and every student. They want to disrupt the legacies of systematic racism in our educational system.
    - Create a sense of belonging
    - Instill pride and engagement in the learning path
    - Diverse perspectives working together
    - Providing resources where they are needed
  - Provide a commitment to students of color furthest away from educational justice starting with African American boys and young men.
  - Deborah discussed targeted universalism – this is setting universal goals pursued by targeted processes to achieve those goals. The targets are based on how different groups are situated within structures and culture. Improvements to a targeted group are improvements for all groups.
  - SPS is focusing also on anti-racism. This is the practice of identifying, challenging, and changing the values, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism.
    - SPS district data confirms that African American boys and young men are the furthest away from educational justice within our system.
    - The outcomes we see confirm the presence of systemic racism and reflect a system that was not designed to recognize and support the brilliance and excellence of African American students.
    - We believe an intentional focus on the academic, cultural, and social-emotional well being and strengths of African American boys and young men will move us forward to educational and racial justice in SPS.
  - This is a process that focuses on changing systems rather than individuals. We need to critically analyze our practices, policies, and procedures continually to better understand](https://rise.articulate.com/share/U0gjF0TV6V0HWLjDnoHWeYpGXbFOwvpv4#/)

where institutional and structural racism exist. Seattle Excellence 2019-2024: Strategic Priorities include:

- High quality instruction and learning experiences
- Predictable and consistent operational systems
- Culturally responsive workforce
- Inclusive and authentic engagement

### 3. MERCER ASPIRATIONS AND IDENTITY

- + Amanda introduced an exercise of live notetaking as it relates to 3 questions. The goal is to start getting to know members of the SDAT committee and what some of their thoughts and priorities are for the new school. (page 12)
- + The first question was "What are your aspirations for Mercer Middle School?" Responses include: (page 13)
  - Hopeful that Mercer will be a place where students have voice, choice, and agency. They believe they are valued members of the community whose opinions should be heard. They can demonstrate how they are smart and can develop their passions, and they have agency and will know how they can impact our community. -Cindy
  - Community members (parents and friends) as well as students feel safe to congregate. A space that can be used by more than just students and staff, but also community people. - Janet
  - Community steeped in cultural wealth with linguistics. Would like to see spaces that are moveable and not permanent. Would like spaces where large and small groups can perform. Spaces to express themselves within the wealth of their community. Whether in classrooms or other places, whether storytelling or more formal types of presentations -Sherrie
  - Flexibility and some degree of future proofing so when the educational styles, population demographics, and technology change the project's enormous resource investment can change and evolve. Does not want to see the site littered with portables in the future because the building could not adapt in 10 years. How can flexibility and mutability be incorporated? Also wants it to be an example of equity, inclusion, and environmental sustainability for the whole community. -Rumi
  - Flexibility to change spaces in the future and capable to adapt to the technology. Would like this in classrooms and community spaces. Having outdoor spaces that connect to the community. Right now, the site is so closed off from the community that we disappear, so she wants to connect to the community so it feels more welcome there. -Sue
  - Centering the indigenous community history with the site. Using Indigenous names for Beacon Hill. (Lushootseed, aWatSeech, pronounced QWAH-tseech) Also, people of colors' history within the school. Making the outside and inside feel like it belongs to the communities of color. Outdoor spaces that create grounding for the community as a part of Mercer Middle School.
  - Making the school more economically sustainable would be a great idea, especially since all need to do more things for the environment if each is going to survive past the next 40 years. – Azi (taken from the Team's chat)
- + The second question was "Where are the cultural hubs / social hubs?" (page 14)
  - Spaces that are moveable, changeable, and flexible. These can be used for community, adults, students and can be used for small groups. These can be adaptable in the future to additional classroom space. – Cindy
  - At lunch kids play basketball, we need covered outdoor space because it rains in Wa, and it's also a social thing. They also use the fields after school. -Janet
  - Currently, they have two social hubs, the library and cafeteria, and some outside. It is not enough! There are not enough spaces for kids to "be" without being in a huge group. This

- makes it hard to be a library with this large of a group gathering. Would like more spaces for kids to gather. – Sue
- Mindfulness center at Mercer where students can de-escalate and calm down. – Virginia
- In the same way we can honor silence in the mindfulness center, we want space that can honor joyful noise. Have places to sing, dance, play basketball, play music, and play instruments. Space for kids to express themselves and be goofy. -Sherrie
- As a family who hasn't used the school building because of Covid, they have found the field and concrete pad has become a hub for many families. -Erin
- + The third question was "What are elements of your school identity that are important to recognize?" (page 15)
  - Teachers can look left and right down a hallway and can see students and colleagues. There are no spaces to hide. -Sherrie
  - The staff really like being able to see each other -- give the staff opportunities to connect with each other. -Janet
  - Teachers are waiting for students to arrive at the door. Students are greeted with a welcome as they come in. Helps to start the day right. -Rumi
  - Mercer does a monthly recognition for students and staff. This would require a large space to gather. -Sherrie
  - Rich cultural community, the multi-linguistic environment is a real treasure that the school does a good job of celebrating and recognizing. That should come forward in the new building. The most special aspect of the school is the dedication of the people who work there. Celebrating them and putting them at the front. -Rumi
  - Music program is so big, so it is very important to have places to practice and perform. –Emily
  - This question would be great to get student input. Creating relationships beyond a room or a building. -Katie
  - STEM classes are crowded into classrooms, but in the future a bigger space that was not so crowded would be great. -Emily
  - African American and black students, centering them in the SPS work, there has to be a callout that recognizes their identity in the built design. -Erin
  - Cultural events happen in the current cafeteria because they can serve food and have space to perform. This activity will continue in the new school. -Janet
  - Would like buildings with green materials such as HDPE. Also improving recycling and composting and using solar panels. Reducing energy use could also really help reduce our school's carbon footprint. -Azi (taken from the Team's chat)

### 3. NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY

- + Amanda introduced our next activity which will involve getting to know the neighborhood through the eyes of the SDAT group. (page 16-17)
- + Amanda started off by orienting the group to the site plan. She gave an architectural perspective on the site as Bassetti architects see it. This includes:
  - Identifying the school and its surrounding buildings and site (VA hospital, Jefferson Park, residential neighborhoods, major roadways, etc.)
  - She explained some features we know about the site such as a steep slope on the Southwest corner, the entry into the site off the busy South Columbian Way and pointed out the undulating thin shell concrete roof (which is one of the areas of interest for the Landmarks Board).
  - Amanda and Mike explained that the school is currently zoned as SF5000 (Single Family minimum lot size of 5,000 square ft) which means our school is in a residential neighborhood and has a height limit of 30'.

- After reviewing the site, Mike expressed that this is what we notice about the site, but we want the SDAT group's thoughts on the site and neighborhood because they will have important input on what they see on a day-to-day basis.
- + At this point we broke into two groups for an exercise in community mapping. Comments from this exercise are included on the attached map from each group. (see attachments)
  - We ran out of time for the Recap which we will review in our next SDAT.
- + Mike notified the group that our next session would be March 9<sup>th</sup> from 6-7:30pm and before that we would like to do two photo safari exercises. (page 20-24)
  - The first photo exercise is to identify exemplary spaces or places within the Mercer Community. We would like everyone to take photos of places that have meaning to them and email them back to Bassetti.
  - The second photo exercise is to identify inspiring places or spaces of powerful learning and email them back to Bassetti.
    - Mike provided photo examples of powerful learning from all over the world as examples of collaboration, play, and outdoor learning.
  - Bassetti will email everyone with further instructions and an email address to send the photos to.

#### 8. NEXT STEPS

- + Next SDAT will be March 9<sup>th</sup>.
- + Bassetti will send out instructions for the photo safari.
- + Bassetti will provide meeting minutes to the group that includes this presentation and the community mapping graphic.
- + Bassetti will provide a roster of all the attendees.

See attached documents from meeting: (Presentation slide show)

END OF MEETING MINUTES