

## MEETING MINUTES

Project	Mercer Int'l Middle School	Project No	2002
Subject	SDAT Meeting #2	Meeting Date	3/9/2021
From	Bassetti Architects	Date	3/15/2021

### Attending

+ Attended in person

\* Attended by Phone

x Did not Attend

* Brad Tong Managing Director	Shiels Oblatz Johnson	* Cheri Hendricks Design Manager	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
x 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
x Deborah Northern Equity and Engagement Manager	Seattle Public School	* Edward Arreola Project Designer	Bassetti Architects
* Sarah Pritchett 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
x 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
x 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
* Grace Floyd Parent	Mercer Int'l Middle School		

## Notes

This was the second 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 SDAT #2. He gave an overview of today's agenda. (page 1)
- + Mike provided a brief re-introduction of the District, SOJ, and Bassetti team. (page 2)
- + Mike welcomed new members of the SDAT team that were not able to make the first meeting. (page 3)
- + Mike reiterated that this is a safe place for discussion and any derogatory comments would not be tolerated. (page 4)
- + Amanda provided a recap of our SDAT #1 meetings.
  - o She highlighted the District's focus on Racial Equity by acknowledging key topics that Deborah Northern covered in her SDAT #1 presentation. These include: (page 5)
    - Disrupting the legacies of systemic racism
    - Committing to students of color furthest from educational justice
    - Targeted universalism
    - Identifying, challenging, and changing the values, structures, and behavior that perpetuate systemic racism
    - SPS has 4 priorities as a part of their Strategic Plan:
      - High quality instruction and learning experiences
      - Predictable and consistent operational systems
      - Culturally responsive workforce
      - Inclusive and authentic engagement
  - o Next Amanda highlighted consistent ideas that came from a live note taking session that focused around 3 questions: (page 6)
    - What are your aspirations for Mercer Middle School?
    - What are the cultural / social hubs?
    - What are elements of your school identity that are important to you?
  - o From these 3 questions we heard consistent themes, which include:
    - Students having voice, choice, and agency
    - Embracing the community and creating a safe place for them at the school
    - Flexibility and future proofing
    - Sustainable materials
    - Providing more social hubs for students to gather
    - Honoring silence and mindfulness as well as joyful noise
    - Opportunities for staff to connect
    - Places to perform for students and the community

- Helping communities of color see their identity in the school building
- The last item Amanda reviewed was the community mapping exercise where SDAT members discussed their South Seattle neighborhood. (page 7)
  - Students come to school from all directions
  - Students respect the local businesses
  - There are several nearby partnerships (Food forest, Alta Vista, Boys and Girls club)
  - There are businesses that represent this community.
  - Traffic and student safety is a concern along 15<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.
  - Bus drop location is a concern with neighbors, homeless camp, and bus traffic.
  - A lot of families have students at both Mercer and Cleveland HS.
- + Amanda provided the goals for today's SDAT #2 meeting. (page 8)
  - Learn what spaces and places inspire your fellow SDAT members from our photo safari homework.
  - Highlight the District Strategic Plan priorities most applicable to the Mercer Int'l Middle School
  - Introduce the Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) for Mercer MS.

## 2. PHOTO SAFARI REVIEW

- + The photo safari was homework from SDAT #1 where we asked members of the SDAT to send photos or images of places that inspire in their south Seattle neighborhood. We also asked that they submit images of places or space that they feel are powerful learning examples.
  - Mike introduced the goals of the photo safari and that we are looking for concise descriptive language for why the image inspires you.
  - Places that inspire in South East Seattle (page 10-13)
    - Jefferson Community Center – Hub, **Safe haven, Multi-cultural, Multi-generational**
    - Fou Lee Market – **Stimulating environment**, Multi-sensory, Multi-cultural with all SE Asian languages, familiar smells from the deli
    - Murals – throughout the Beacon Hill neighborhood
    - Jefferson Park Clubhouse and Lawn Bowling – **places to gather**
    - El Quetzal Restaurant – owned by a Mercer family, staff gather here, outdoor seating
    - Community Fridge – Caring, **generous character** of the neighborhood
    - Kubota Gardens – Japanese style garden, free access, hosts gatherings, provides a **connection to nature**.
    - Hing Hay Park – Activated the International District, **bring the community together** and benefits everyone, multi-racial, students frequent China Town for food
    - Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center – **Community, culture, voice, and performance**
    - Seattle U Gardens: **Refuge in an urban center** with lots of little gardens
    - Beacon Hill Library – beloved landmark on Beacon Ave, small learning spaces inside.
    - Asian Counseling & Referral Services – **Flexible space inside, Multi-purpose**, gym can get activated for senior lunches, sports, or big gatherings. Also, a community meeting place.
    - The Station and Victrola Coffee Shops – **places to gather**
    - The Station – same building as Plaza de Roberto Maestas, they have been doing food pantries and giving away PPE
    - Jefferson Park Samoan Cricket League – Culturally specific use of space that anchors a community

- African American Academy – designed by a well-respected black architect, African centered education
- Beacon Food Forest – gem next to the school, some partnerships with the gardens, outdoor learning environments, **connection to nature**, rich learning opportunities and provides a chance for students to understand how food is grown and developed for lifelong nutrition habits.
- Powerful Learning Examples (page 14-19)
  - Sue provided a variety of library images and modern learning spaces. She likes that they are **open, not square, have curves, not regimented, moveable seating, relaxed, and flexible**.
  - Sue's students provided about 10 images. The biggest thing was they want **green space**. Tree, ponds, atriums, big windows, let light in and greenery in, **connection to nature indoors and outdoors**. Students want gardens with places to sit and places to be outside. Sue mentioned the Cleveland library had a beautiful corner with an incredible view, but the windows are slim, and the space is dark and crowded. More open with low curved shelving would be best in a library.
  - One image provided by a student was for a small eating space. Wanted an **intimate feel for a small group of people**, but still within the larger group. Could seat 2-4 people, but not be the big institutional cafeteria tables.
  - The students also wanted **solar energy**.
  - Sacramento Church – Grace's 8<sup>th</sup> grade daughter liked the **windows**. Providing more **daylight and greenery**. Liked the look of lots of doors, windows, and brick and single level.
  - ASU Gammage Auditorium – Tracy liked that it was circular, and the bridges felt like **outstretched arms which was very welcoming**
  - Summit Sierra School – Erin liked how open the school was with **flexible space, lots of windows, and bright but not obnoxious colors**.
  - SpEd – Katie said there are several pathways for SpEd students, and they need a **place to be a community**. They are all Gen Ed first, but sometimes want to work together. A life skills space should offer cooking, laundry, cleaning, and accommodate more than one class at a time.
  - Outdoor classroom – Virginia liked that it was covered and being outside excites the students. She liked the green and more natural "flooring."
  - Modern Learning Space – **spaces for students to just "BE"**. The only spaces for them now are the cafeteria, library, or outside. No spaces to just sit and be social. It should be **multi-use, bright, open**.
  - D(esign).School at Stanford – Cindy said this is one of her favorite spaces. She likes the **nimbleness** and whiteboards. It **invites innovation** and has an industrial character. It is **collaborative and forward thinking**. The room can be turned into whatever we need it to be, and those tasks change all the time which makes it **future proof**.

### 3. DISTRICT WIDE IMPROVEMENT PLAN & PRIORITIES (STRATEGIC PLAN)

- + Cheri introduced additional key priorities of the District's Strategic Plan. She explained our breakout exercise was for each group to discuss one of the topics listed below and how they envision that within Mercer MS. (page 20-21 and breakout group attachment)
  - **Create supportive and culturally responsive environments**
    - The environment should be a representation of "our" community. "Non-generic" using art, murals, places, faces, music, things from our community are graphically

represented. It creates a sense of self and acknowledgement by seeing people represented that are black and/or look like me. (Grace, parent)

- The community is involved, informed, and visible in promoting a rigorous academic learning environment.
- Diversity of students – how is this supported? For example, Muslim students that pray during the day. Is there a quiet space provided for this?
- What activities do kids like to do and what would be the most supportive space for these activities?
  - Kids like to hang out, play, sing, dance, and perform. A place with good lighting so kids can take pictures and make videos where they dance and sing. Murals would be good backdrops for this.
  - Space that are flexible in expanding their capacity and use as needs arise. Spaces for learning in different sized groups. Small learning spaces with moveable furniture.
- **Work in partnership with families and communities who represent students of color who are furthest from educational justice**
  - For generations, teaching/learning here has been based on Western models, which misses the mark on supporting the learning of non-western based culture of many Mercer students.
  - Educational justice means inviting collaboration in teaching/learning and different ways of teaching/learning.
  - While we are focusing on a specific group identified as furthest away from educational justice, it will be a moving target and it will evolve. Be ready and flexible to shift.
  - Environmental justice means everybody has what they need (no more, no less). That means focusing on different groups.
  - Recognize that many Mercer students have experienced some sort of trauma. Creating safe, inviting, welcoming environments is crucial.
  - With partnerships, common space is always a premium, community partners are always vying for the same space.
  - Create spaces for use by multiple community groups (i.e. rotating schedules; drop in services; practical considerations like locking cabinets).
  - In this era, security-locked doors are not welcoming. Solve for this. What does “welcoming” look like?
- **Students of color who are furthest from educational justice will feel safe and welcome**
  - What would be the elements you would want a student to see when approaching the school to feel safe and welcome?
    - It should be easy to find the main entry. Not confusing.
    - The main office should be open and welcoming and right when you walk in. Do not locate it down the hall. Provide windows and transparency. It should be obvious with good seating and signage as well as student art. There should be an ease to finding people to help you.
  - What about non-English speaking students? How do they feel safe and welcome?
    - Murals and artwork, visible signage in multiple languages.
  - Does the scale of the space make a difference?
    - Not as much in a middle school (compared to an elementary school). Students have all different levels of growth spurts so it is challenging to determine the perfect scale.

- Instead use cheerful colors and the use of nature to help brighten experiences and soften spaces.
- How does personalizing space make students feel safe and welcome?
  - An inability to change things in a school building is frustrating. Having changeable spaces with ease of installation, and not be permanent would be ideal.
  - Spaces to show student art, but be able to change it out is nice.
- How does community use play into safe and welcome? Do you feel a school is more than a school now?
  - Yes, connection to the community is important. They need access to technology, chairs, and places to sit. A dedicated area would be nice.
  - It would be great if the family outreach person could provide food and welcome people at the front of the school instead of in the back by the loading dock. It would be more welcoming.
- **Students of color who are furthest from educational justice will be proficient in mathematics in 7<sup>th</sup> grade.**
  - Mike - Put math on display, highlight the engineering aspects. An example is the image from Hazel Wolf with the braced frame structural calculations as a wall graphic.
  - Mike – Another example is Aviation HS with their small breakout space which was meant for students to spill out and work with big writeable walls.
  - What teaching and learning activities help to promote math at the 7<sup>th</sup> grade level?
    - Cindy – Targeted instruction, master schedule support smaller class sizes. Pedagogy accelerates math learning and partnerships which is a standard base in Mercer instruction.
    - Matt – Math 7 classes, but then we offer second support class for some students. The spaces we use need to be flexible. Small groups is a huge part of learning math.
      - 3-4 kids, then re-grouping. Being able to use spaces in the classroom to generate ideas, wipe them out, write again. Some hands-on pieces too, not just writing. Technology is an important part – especially now that we are one-to-one. We could use technology to cast something someone is looking at onto the wall.
    - It is important to be able to see all your students at one time. A question was asked: How do you structure space in a high school different than a middle school to have eyes on all kids?
      - They miss their promethean (smart) boards and being able to assess students quickly in real time. Making your thinking public and visible, using clickers where kids could type their answers and we can see them on screen. We need space to adapt to emerging technologies.
    - Math is integrated and we are innovating around thinking about math outside a math classroom.
      - Is there collaboration? It is more that there is math in the STEM program but planning for the potential for integration is good. What does an integrated math/science program look like?
      - What are the strategies for teaching math that we can explore?
      - What are the environments we are creating that allow for that innovation?

- How do we move away from time-bound learning?
  - Cindy: we are moving away from Taylor time and age-based education toward competency-based education.
  - Divide the competencies. Could we have math classrooms that work on certain skills and kids aren't in the same class.
- Can we create classrooms that are flexible – larger than typical? Can we be more flexible within that space?
  - No load bearing internal walls, so we can always change it?
  - Flexibility – controlling volume is the big thing when you have flexible walls. Or open into multiple classrooms.
  - Sliding glass walls that also control sound.
  - Moveable whiteboards that can rotate. Flexible rotational walls.
- Cindy doesn't like "this is a math class". All classrooms should be able to host whatever. We only get one building every 67 years. The learning environments should have no fixed cabinetry, each one has a sink, no fixed bookcases, and multiple presentation spaces.

#### 4. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN & PRIORITIES

- + Cheri provided insight that even though there are District wide priorities, each school within the District also has their own priorities. Each principal in the District creates a Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP). (page 23)
- + Cindy presented the CSIP for Mercer and described the top educational strategies within the plan. (page 24)
  - Literacy Workshop Model – the way they are taught is students gather as a large group at the front of the classroom for a mini lesson, then go back to individual work.
  - Science and STEM program – incorporate more technology and increasing innovation
  - Care for students' social-emotional life and learning life – we are becoming more trauma informed. Care for their life so that they can accelerate and have access to high performance.
  - Outside-of-school programming – Mercer has an ambitious program of after school activities, need space for cooking to coding, as well as for Dungeons and Dragons.
  - Opportunities for family engagement – this is not an event; it is a daily occurrence. How can they feel authentically welcomed?
  - Community partnerships – with over 40 different agencies. Mercer will not be a landlord; we need generic publicly zoned spaces for partners spaces that protect our students because the public areas are separate from the student areas) Partners don't own those spaces, but they are available to them.
- + Cindy also provided a compelling description of how she envisions architectural responses to these priorities. (page 25)
  - Move from "classrooms" to "learning environments". Including everything from the cafeteria to where we hang out after school.
  - What is the purpose – we are learning academically, social-emotionally, and physically, we need flexible enough space to adapt to the changes.
  - We want students to own, drive, present their learning- small groups or to the community. We want their learning to reflect the industries into which they will enter careers.
  - Now it functions in the factory-model Taylor-time type of learning. What if we got away from the boxes? What do kids need to demonstrate their own optimal learning? How do we give them agency to discover their passions?
  - Can partners use the building when we are not there? Is there an evening access place and some closed areas?



- We want our kids to innovate, and teachers are just facilitators. We need to future proof our buildings, so if we want to just move a wall, we can.
- Our school right now in every classroom is an analog clock that students don't know how to use. This needs to help students adapt and change to the technological innovations as society changes.
- + Below were the bullet points from her slide:
  - Flexible environments that can support different types of learning
  - Student collaboration, presentation, and performance space
  - Enhanced opportunity for student leadership and voice
  - Integration of community partnerships, family engagement and school community
  - Opportunities for innovation
  - Durability and longevity
- + Mike provided a recap of the topics we discussed in SDAT #2. (page 26)
  - Places and spaces within the Mercer community that inspire and why.
  - Places and spaces that people feel are powerful learning environments
  - Reviewed the foundation principles of the Strategic Plan and Racial Equity
  - Learned about the Continuous School Improvement Plan and how that can influence the spaces we create.

#### 7. NEXT STEPS

- + Next SDAT #3 will be April 6<sup>th</sup>. (page 27)
- + Bassetti will provide meeting minutes to the group

See attached documents from meeting: (Presentation slide show)

END OF MEETING MINUTES