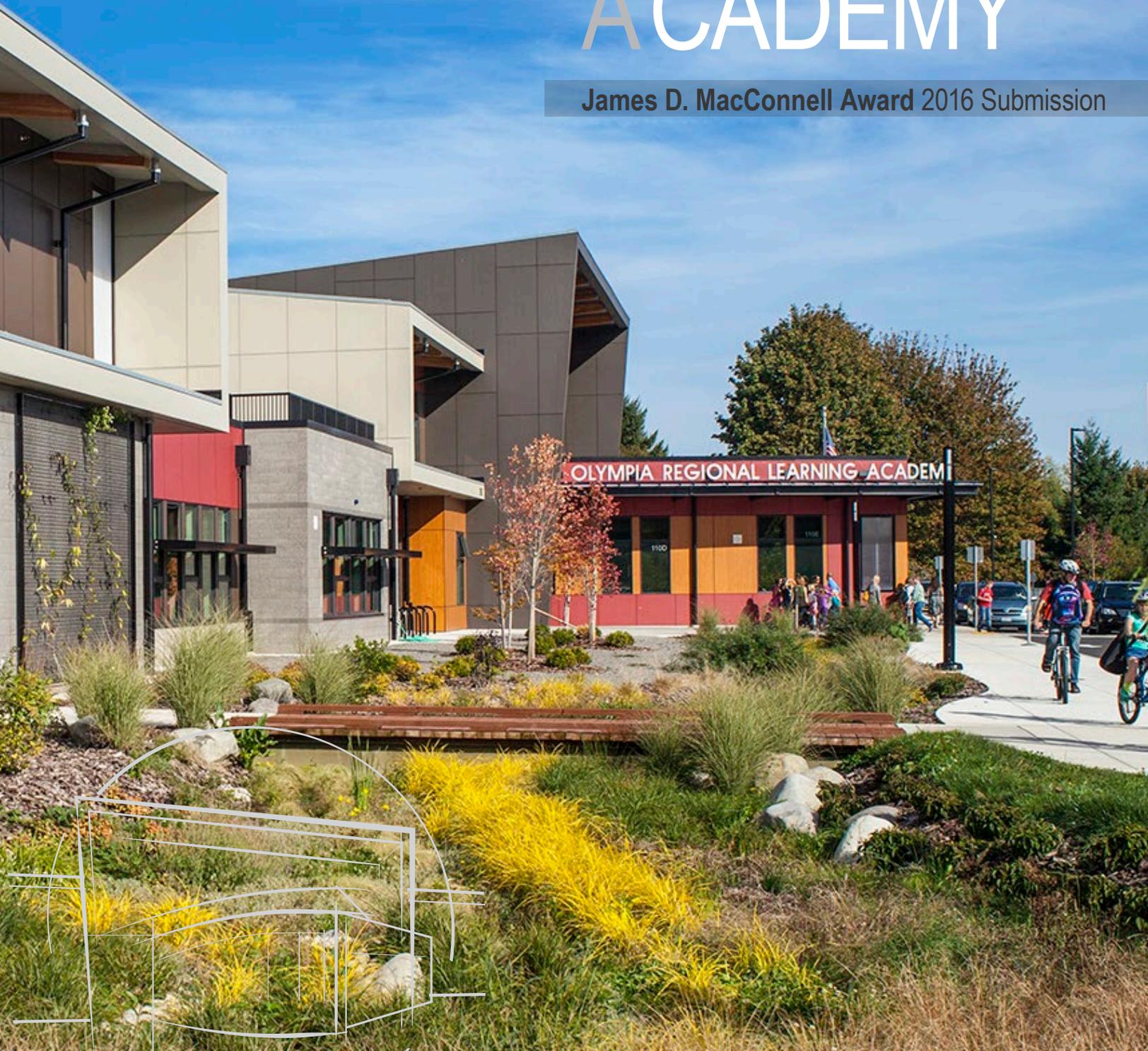


OLYMPIA REGIONAL LEARNING ACADEMY

James D. MacConnell Award 2016 Submission



Executive summary

Founded in November 2006, the Olympia Regional Learning Academy (ORLA) provides innovative educational alternatives to students throughout the area of Central/ Southwest Washington. Its specialized programs - Homeschool Connect, iConnect Academy, ORLA Montessori and the Online Development Center - give students of nearly all ages choices in selecting teaching and learning to suit their customized needs.

Prior to the completion of its new building, ORLA occupied the Olympia School District's former Rogers Elementary, a facility earning the lowest building condition rating in the District at that time. While maximizing the opportunities at this former location, the growing academy faced many challenges in occupying its aging, outdated structure. Inspired by a shared dream of building new, stakeholder discussions took into consideration how a project like this could achieve educational goals and objectives of both ORLA and the District. Awareness spread of how a new facility could better serve its growing population and better suit its curriculum, while also easing issues of capacity at other schools within the District. A follow-up assessment confirmed that the site of the District's former M^cKinley Elementary School offered the greatest opportunity to support envisioned outdoor amenities, provide convenient access to public transit, and better position itself within a location more central to its users.

This is the story of the inclusive, collaborative design and construction process of the Olympia Regional Learning Academy, and how the completed project succeeds in achieving goals on a variety of levels. For the District, the project is a future-planned, flexible and durable facility, that represents a regional model for sustainability; for its user groups, the new brick-and-mortar home base welcomes on-site learners while providing the resources and technology to support learning off campus; and for students, the Academy's enriching environment bolsters a sense of independence, creativity and individuality. Finally, for its neighborhood, ORLA offers the indoor and outdoor amenities to enrich the experience of living and working within its vibrant Olympia-area community.



1 PLANNING



ORLA Early Concept Rendering

Scope of work, budget

In early 2012, supporters of the Olympia School District shared collective enthusiasm over its early spring bond passage, approving \$97.8 million in school construction funding. Following a year+ long analysis that involved assessment of current facility needs, population growth, housing trends, enrollment data, and a community input survey involving more than 900 local citizens, this event assured that a series of new construction, expansion and remodel projects would materialize, improving a number of locations across the District.

In June, individuals representing the Olympia Regional Learning Academy stood side-by-side with the District's Capital Planning and Construction staff to conduct a pre-submittal meeting, an event marking an exciting milestone in the school's journey. The destination: to create a facility unlike any other. This gathering initiated the search for a design and construction team tasked with implementing a vision for a multi-use learning facility with no prototype nor predecessor by which to model. To the group of hopeful designers and engineers gathered in a dimly-lit multi-purpose room, ORLA's Administrator and the District's Director of Planning and Construction painted a proverbial picture to describe the hopes, dreams and priorities for the project.

In its most basic form, the work scope included three elements. The educational facility would:

1. Create a quality learning environment for an academy shared by three schools /four user groups;
2. Strive for net-zero energy use readiness, a significant step for the District toward increased sustainability of its facilities; and
3. Convey a design aesthetic to prompt the question "What is it?"

A unique school with a regional draw, ORLA's population at the time was made up of students, 60% of whom were from within District, and 40% from out of the area. Families were known to commute from Grays Harbor, Shelton and Chehalis, some traveling for up to an hour one-way. This aspect, paired with the requirement for parents to remain on-site while students attend class, brought the need for in-house amenities to give students and visitors places to eat, visit, work, and network. With this, the aesthetic must convey a sense comfort and welcome, within a "home-like" environment. For parents caring for their students' younger siblings, an infant/toddler room was envisioned for diaper changing, napping and play.

User groups

ORLA's programs serve learners desiring less traditional paths of education, while supporting others seeking atypical resources due to a variety of life circumstances. Resources are offered to a broad range of students for varying reasons, such as:

- Home schooled children whose parents look to ORLA's hConnect classes to supplement the lessons provided at home.
- Kids struggling with medical conditions. Utilizing iConnect's electronic means for accessing education, this program offers a brick-and-mortar location to provide in-person tutoring, mentoring and testing.
- Athletes spending daytime hours in training, relying on a flexible schedule to help maintain academic progress.
- Learners enrolled in traditional schools seeking specific classes to supplement their conventional education.
- District educators, looking to obtain professional development and also utilize the on-line educational resources within their classrooms.

The three schools within the academy operate somewhat independently, sharing common administrative functions. Similar to a community college, students follow customized schedules as they move from class to class. Learning spaces - which may cater to primary students in the morning then secondary learners in the afternoon - rely on furniture, casework and equipment that is flexible and height-adjustable.



hConnect (Homeschool Connect)
A K-12 program, offering over 100 classes to supplement the education of home-schooled learners.

ORLA Montessori
A K-6 Montessori school serving over 150 students, forecasting continued growth.

iConnect Academy
Online distance and hybrid learning program with e-courses targeted for middle and high school students; program includes on-site learning center.

On-Line Development Center
District-wide eLearning resource for all schools, and professional development for teachers.

“ We started at Saint John’s Church with 30 students in two programs,”
said ORLA administrator Joy Walton Kawasaki.

“I didn’t know how large it would grow.”

Joy Walton Kawasaki, ORLA Administrator
as quoted in The Olympian, December 29, 2014

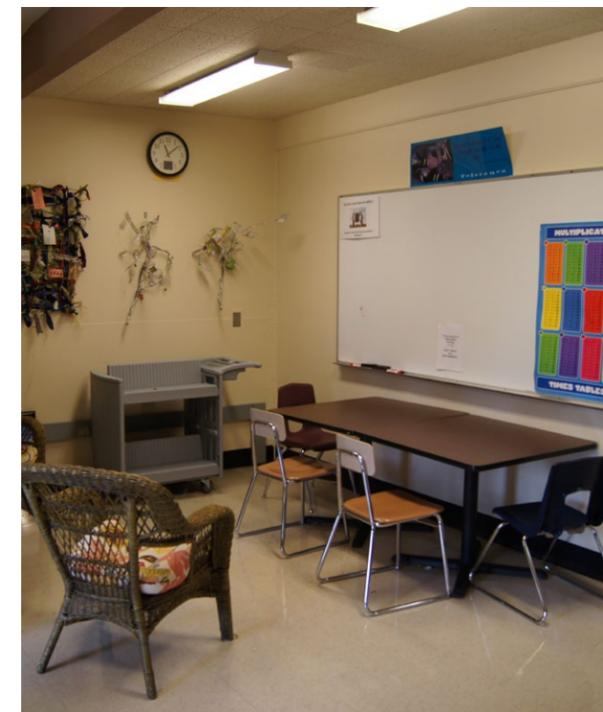
Since its humble beginnings, the organization relocated a handful of times, consistently seeking larger space in response to the continual growth escalation of its programs. ORLA’s former home base, a mid-century elementary school once described as “dismal” by the District Architect, was in a period of rapid decline. It was predicted that ORLA’s anticipated growth would once again max out its square footage within the next few years.

Following successful bond passage in early 2012, a large, representative group of stakeholders engaged with an Educational Planner to communicate needs, assign adjacencies, and seek efficiencies. From this, project educational specifications (‘ed specs’) were developed, which captured the specific requirements of each school and generated the initial determination of overall square footage. The compiled data was set to serve as the programmatic “road map” for the project.

The predesign phase also increased the District’s awareness of the complexities involved with synthesizing the needs of its users, in addition to the challenges stemming from its own drive to “raise its bar” in school sustainability. The notion to pursue GC/CM (General Contractor as Construction Manager) was raised as an alternative to traditional Design/Build delivery. This approach, pairing expertise of Architect and General Contractor for both design and construction, appeared to be the most feasible means to achieve its stated goals within the \$20 million MACC (maximum allowable construction cost).



ORLA’s existing conditions at its prior building, the former Rogers Elementary School. Below left, the exterior garden plaza illustrates the importance the school community placed on outdoor education.





Available assets

The District assessed two potential site candidates: 1.) the then-current ORLA property at Rogers Elementary, and 2.) the former site of M^cKinley Elementary School, a District-owned parcel of land previously sitting vacant for decades. Each site was analyzed for its suitability to house the academy, factoring considerations such as the ability to support its educational programs; capacity for future growth; position within the region for ease of parent and student access; compatibility with (and eventual impact on) the neighborhood; building and zoning codes; and financial considerations. This research, including both study and community outreach, ultimately led to the M^cKinley site being selected as the most ideal location for the new ORLA.

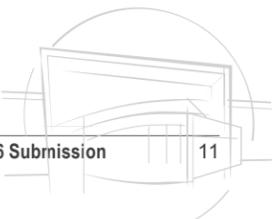
Not only did the chosen site meet the established baseline criteria, but its existing features also contributed toward the aura envisioned for the environment. Surrounded by single and multi-family residences and bounded on three sides by Boulevard Road, 15th Avenue and a quiet cul-de-sac, the site was wrapped by a vegetated buffer at its rear corner, establishing a sense of privacy at its Northeastern quadrant. The nearly flat parcel had a gentle upward slope at its southern frontage, a feature that felt ready to nestle the structure into its site. A pair of prominent cedar trees stood sentinel along the South property line, symbolic of a welcoming gesture.



Top: A panoramic view prior to design shows a relatively flat site. Single family residences are buffered by vegetation at the Northeast, as seen to the right of photo.

Above: 15th/Dayton Street SE, looking West;

Left: Boulevard Road, looking South.



2PROCESS

“We also had a complex process to go through to annex the property into the City, and work to amending outdated city codes that were not school friendly. (The Architect) navigated the project through a gauntlet of City requirements to keep the Agency Review time down, and stay on the established timeline.”

Kurtis Cross, AIA
OSD Interim Supervisor of Capital Planning & Construction;
ORLA Project Manager

Overview

The overall goals of the project provided the impetus for the challenging process that ensued, and the team found themselves referring back to them as tools to weigh criteria as part of seeking balance among the many complex factors influencing the major decisions as the project moved forward.

Soon after start-up, two large issues began to emerge: the budget and educational specifications, developed through an earlier process prior to A/E selection, did not account for a couple of key components. Upon confirming the square footage requirements from the ed spec, an inadequate area allocation was discovered, leaving the budget developed for a building smaller than what was required. Additionally, the MACC did not take into account the up-charge for pursuing net-zero energy readiness.

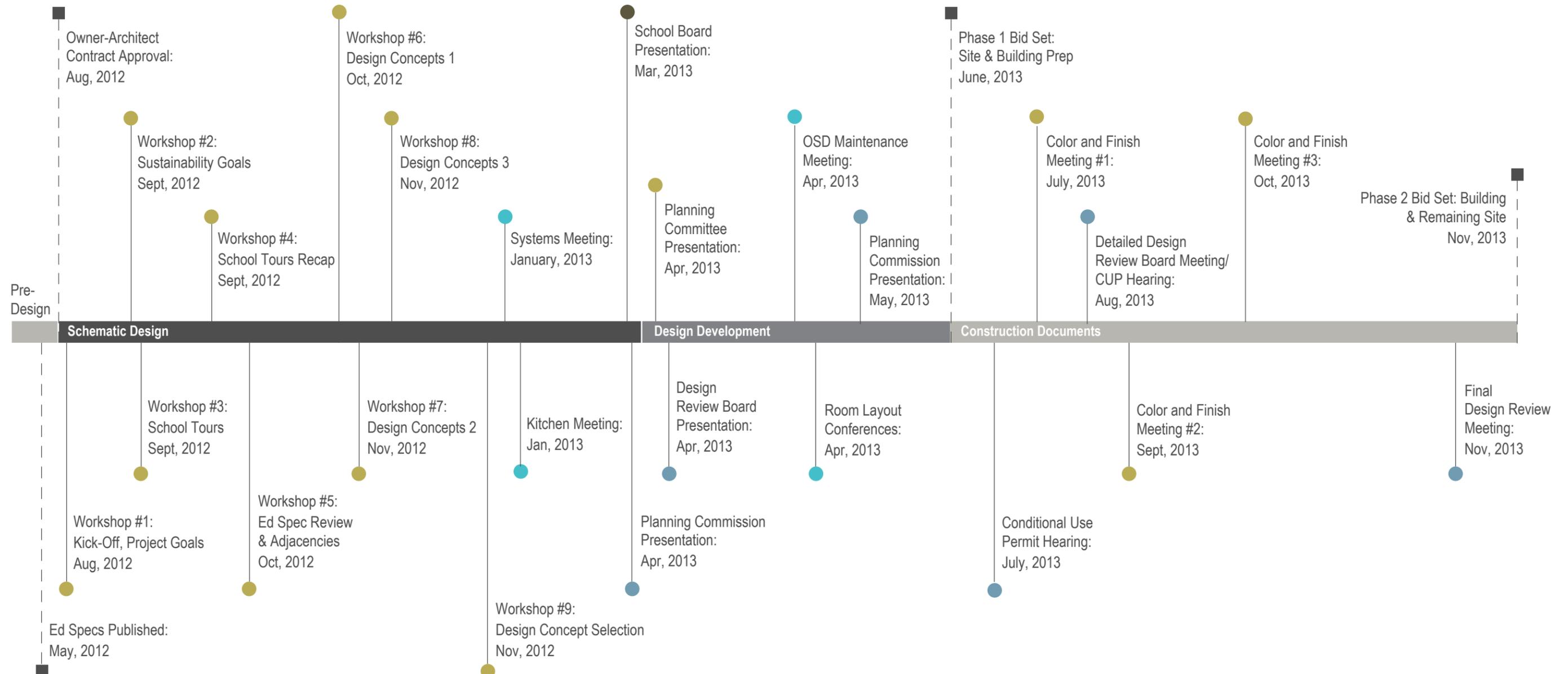
During early Schematic Design, the District submitted its application to the State of Washington for GC/CM delivery, receiving approval at a time when the added input was integral in making confident strides in the right direction. Hurdles were overcome through an environment of teamwork and creative thinking, and the project benefited from the blend of input and expertise shared amongst the District, school staff, design team, and the general contractor (hereafter collectively referred to as “the team”). Decisions big and small were thoroughly vetted and assessed for their contribution toward goal achievement, by a cooperative determined to move the project forward given the shift in parameters.

Opportunities for contribution

Input and involvement was sought from various stakeholders throughout the duration of project. This timeline illustrates the milestone meetings, workshops and presentations involving a diverse array of participants.

Stakeholder Group Involvement

- School Board
- School Planning Advisory Committee - Large Group
- Agencies Having Jurisdiction
- Direct/Key Users - Small Group



Goals for the physical and educational environment

The kick-off workshop allowed the variety of representatives from the District and school community (teachers, support staff, parents representing students of all programs) to become reacquainted with one another, and describe to the Design Team the attributes which make the Olympia Regional Learning Academy special. From this first gathering, detailed project goals were established.

OLYMPIA REGIONAL LEARNING ACADEMY SCHOOL PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

District Representation:

Director of Planning and Construction
Project Manager
Project Coordinator
Resource Conservation Manager

School Staff Representation:

ORLA Administrator
Program Manager
School Secretary
Family Consultant/Staff Support
Custodian
hConnect Teachers
ORLA Montessori Teachers
iConnect Teachers
Paraeducators

Student Representative Parents

GOALS: TO CREATE A SCHOOL THAT IS ...

... welcoming.

Allow students, their families, staff, visitors and the community to know that they are welcome to enter inside, wait in comfort, and utilize and enjoy the building, amenities and grounds.

... family oriented.

Provide a variety of spaces (quiet study, shared gathering, eating, etc.) to help make parents, siblings and other relatives feel at ease, regardless of length of stay.

... accommodating.

Reflect a design that is sensitive to the special needs of visitors (developmental, special, sensory, anxiety, and others.) Provide spaces for quiet contemplation (for introverts) and social interaction (for extroverts). Accommodate large families, infant care, physical challenges of users, and others.

... safe and secure.

Design a safe, secure facility with transparency, visibility and supervision as key components. Locate support spaces (such as toilet rooms) to allow safe travel and return for young children. Create an identifiable “main entry” with a recognizable area for each program while taking into consideration the overall site and building security.

... multi-use, flexible and adaptable.

The layout of the school building and its infrastructure systems, furniture, equipment, and resources, shared among three distinct programs and attended by students of varied ages, should easily adapt to accommodate instruction of a wide variety of topics and programs, to a variety of age groups – from creative writing to art and science; from pre-schoolers to high-schoolers – often within the same day.

... connected to the outdoors.

Connect the building with its outdoor environment. Incorporate design strategies to minimize the visual and spacial separation between indoors and out.

... filled with natural light and fresh air.

Provide ample glazing, strategically-located to create well-daylit spaces. Design ventilation systems that incorporate the natural circulation of fresh air throughout the building.

... sustainable.

With the goal of achieving net-zero (or being net-zero ready), design a school that makes responsible and best use of natural resources, while helping educate students about sustainability.

... technologically advanced.

Incorporate a computer-rich environment integrated with advanced A/V and building systems technology, (communications, lighting, heating and cooling) that is user-friendly and adaptable to change through future upgrades.

... beautiful, warm and comfortable.

Use design features, materials, proportion, scale and color to create beautiful spaces that are less traditionally school-like and more comfortably home-like.

... expandable.

Position and design a structure that logically accommodates future expansion.

... supportive of a self-sustaining program.

To properly sustain the school as a business entity, the design of the school and its programs must draw interest from area students – both within and outside of the District. Incorporate features to attract families and support external alliances through community volunteerism and local business partnerships.

... conducive to brain development.

Through color and texture, student art display, “building as a 3-D textbook,” group and individualized/personalized spaces, designated “nooks” for social interaction among peer groups, and other strategies, create a learning-rich physical environment that supports the development of multiple intelligences, stimulates innovation and encourages life-long learning.

... reflective of “community.”

The school should represent various levels of community: the communities of each of the three individual programs; the ORLA school; and the neighborhood, district and city at-large.





Tours

Tours of similar facilities provided a means for the school planning advisory committee members to envision “what could be” when thinking about possibilities for the new ORLA. With the designers, the group toured and photographed a number of representative new facilities, to assess various aspects including layout, function, feel, and aesthetics. The goal was to identify the most favorable features of the destinations, given that the planned ORLA might result in somewhat of a hybrid of each.

Facilities Toured

- Bellevue Montessori, Bellevue, WA
- Geiger Montessori School, Tacoma, WA
- McMicken Elementary School, SeaTac, WA
- Parkside Elementary School, Des Moines, WA
- Truman High School, Federal Way, WA
- First Creek Middle School, Tacoma, WA
- Lakewood Boys & Girls Club, Lakewood, WA
- Hands On Children’s Museum, Olympia, WA

The workshop following offered a forum for sharing ideas and insights from the tours. The two events also served to establish a similar frame of reference to which committee members could refer when assessing the myriad decisions and impacts yet to come.

Sustainability

Merely a few hands were raised when asked who was familiar with the definition of net-zero energy, one of the project’s overarching goals. A workshop dedicated to the topic of sustainability helped educate the group on the language of green design, and gave the opportunity to discuss how this broad-reaching concept could apply to this project on a number of levels. The GC/CM, Mechanical and Electrical Engineers joined the Designers in leading a discussion which ultimately ranged in detail and complexity, and touched on an array of topics such as operable windows, displacement ventilation, pervious paving, daylight harvesting, occupant comfort and more. Ideas of how sustainability could be integrated into ORLA’s design began to emerge, and during the weeks following, the Design Team and GC/CM assessed the first-costs vs long term savings offered by the big picture strategies.

The Owner, design team and GC/CM put words to a unified vision, and the Sustainability Mission Statement (below) embodied the sustainability goals for the new facility:

***“The Olympia Regional Learning Academy (ORLA) desires a school that exceeds the applicable criteria established in the WSSP (Washington Sustainable Schools Protocol), functions as an educational tool for sustainability (a “3-D Textbook”), is a 50-year building, and is Net-Zero Energy ready.*”**

Recognizing that sustainability is much more than cutting-edge systems and metrics, the ‘human-ness factor’ also played an important role. While the engineers set out to design lighting and heating systems to conserve energy, and designers visualized means to merge beauty with efficiency, all shared the understanding that, in the end, these systems would be operated by (and for) people who would spend many of their waking hours within the building. The team set out to select wall, floor and ceiling finishes to limit VOC levels to ensure a safe and healthy interior environment. Rain gardens, planned to remove storm water from the site, would also serve as a resting spot for weary eyes, as well as a teaching tool for instructors desiring to make sustainability a part of the curriculum. In short, all were cognizant of how the design’s lightened impact on the environment would also result in a healthier, happier place for staff, students and visitors to live and learn.



...Aha

The design team and planning committee delved deeper into the exploration of adjacencies and connections amongst spaces, an aspect of planning made more complex by the unusually large number of direct users (representing hConnect, iConnect, the Montessori and Online Development Center) for this project type. Listening to the various perspectives of each provided the baseline understanding into how the school might function. Through this, all strove to maintain focus on the basic principals of adjacency planning, and categorizing needs and wants.

The shared commonalities of each school included the need for spaces to eat, gather and perform. What their former home lacked was a suitable multi-purpose gathering space for all schools to come together to showcase talents and connect as a larger community. **The “Aha” moment occurred when members of the planning committee rallied around the idea that it was the commons/performance space that would represent ORLA’s metaphorical and physical “heart”.** With this established, clarity emerged as to how each program would relate to this space, and then to each other.

Along with this revelation, input gained through neighborhood outreach efforts led to the determination that ideal placement of the building would locate it squarely in the center of the parcel, and along an east-west axis. This solution would address the site and building considerations (see sidebar) as well as mitigate the visual impact that a large, two-story building would have on the surrounding smaller-scale residences. With this decision however, the team also recognized that this placement would require a zoning code amendment, a long and involved process essential to achieving jurisdictional approval to place the building in this location. Thus, the zoning amendment process soon began.



Members of the planning committee test various arrangements of major program spaces.

SITE | BUILDING CONSIDERATIONS

To fit the context of the community, as well as the fulfill the needs of the school and public both, a strong interior/ exterior relationship was sought between the building and site.

Zones of the site

- Outdoor education (quiet)
- Outdoor activities (active)
- Public access and vehicles (safety)
- Service access/teacher parking (convenience)

Security

Public/parent parking directly adjacent to - and supervisable from - the main entry and administration.

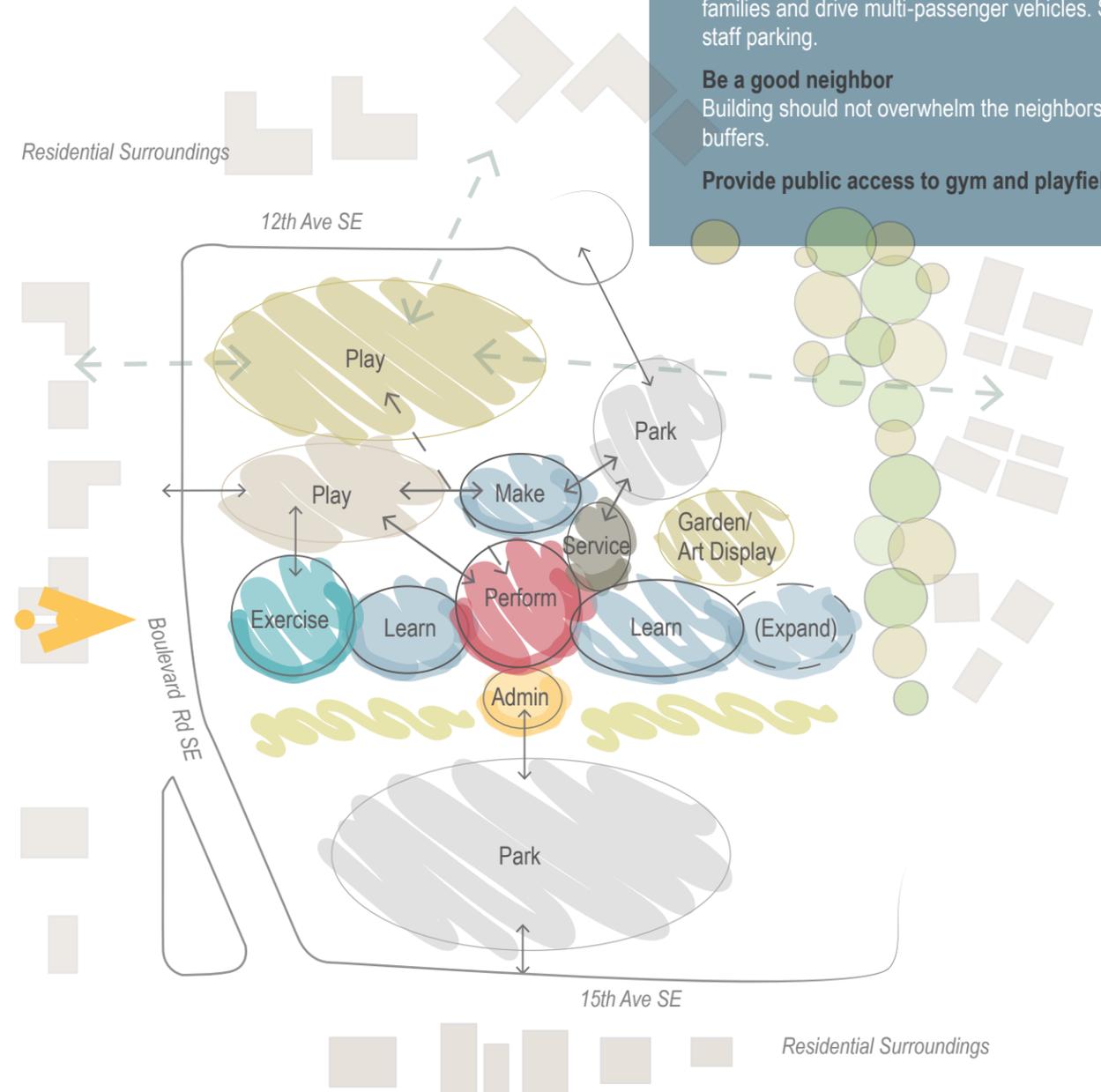
Access

Large pick-up/drop-off lane and parking - nearly all students arrive by car, and there are many parents on campus. ORLA parents are known to raise large families and drive multi-passenger vehicles. Separate staff parking.

Be a good neighbor

Building should not overwhelm the neighbors; provide buffers.

Provide public access to gym and playfields.





Concept A

Concept B

Stakeholder buy-in

Another challenge revolved around the layout of the building's floor plan. Following an interactive start-up process of confirming the needs and wants of the stakeholder group, the architectural design team held an intensive weekend design charrette to share inspiration among its in-house professional staff. This exercise led to the creation of two compelling concepts.

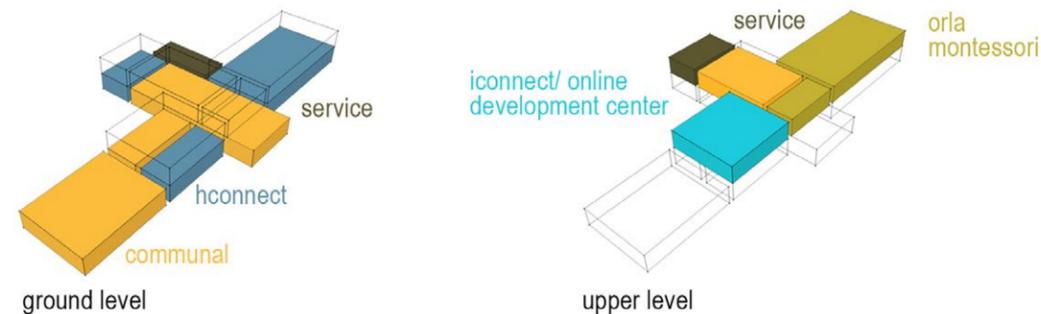
Upon presenting the concepts to the District and planning committee later that week, the client group favored aspects of each. Thus, a series of refinements to both occurred over the next few days. Again the planning committee found value in the opportunities offered by both concepts. This unusual scenario continued, and ultimately led to the extension of the schematic design phase schedule. Four additional weeks allowed the team time to deeply investigate the trade-offs offered by the two concepts, and provided the committee more time to deeply assess the benefits.

Ultimately, it was the cost estimate that confirmed that the simpler, cruciform floor plan (Concept A) provided greater savings through its efficiency in materials and systems. The planning committee recognized that moving forward with this layout would bring more value to the project over the long run. Throughout the remainder of design, the dedicated group of professionals and users carefully weighed many more decisions, in assessment of the ability to meet project goals versus the ability to fit the budget.

City of Olympia approval process

Gaining approval for ORLA's design was a lengthy process, based on the established permitting requirements of the City of Olympia. To begin, the site was located on an "island" of County property surrounded by the City of Olympia; one step involved annexation of the property. To then gain approval for the educational use in the residentially-zoned area, a Conditional Use Permit was needed. Current zoning code requirements would have placed the building within close proximity of the property line, following the City's commercial and retail site guidelines, which was not ideal for use of the site, nor visual impact to the neighborhood. Recognizing that the zoning requirements were not appropriate for a school in a residential neighborhood, the School District decided to take on the City in a lengthy process of a zoning code amendment to allow for the desired building placement.

In addition to the typical building permit plan review, the project needed to undergo the City's design review process. Six presentations at various stages of the project served to communicate to City representatives that the project's massing, colors, security strategies, site lighting and other aspects would positively effect the surrounding neighborhood, through resultant functionality and visual appeal. This cooperative effort amongst the School District, City of Olympia, and the design team contributed toward successful approval processes completed on schedule.



The combined program size of ORLA Montessori + iConnect roughly approximates the square footage requirements for the larger hConnect; thus the solution stacks the schools 2-over-1.



Branding through graphic design

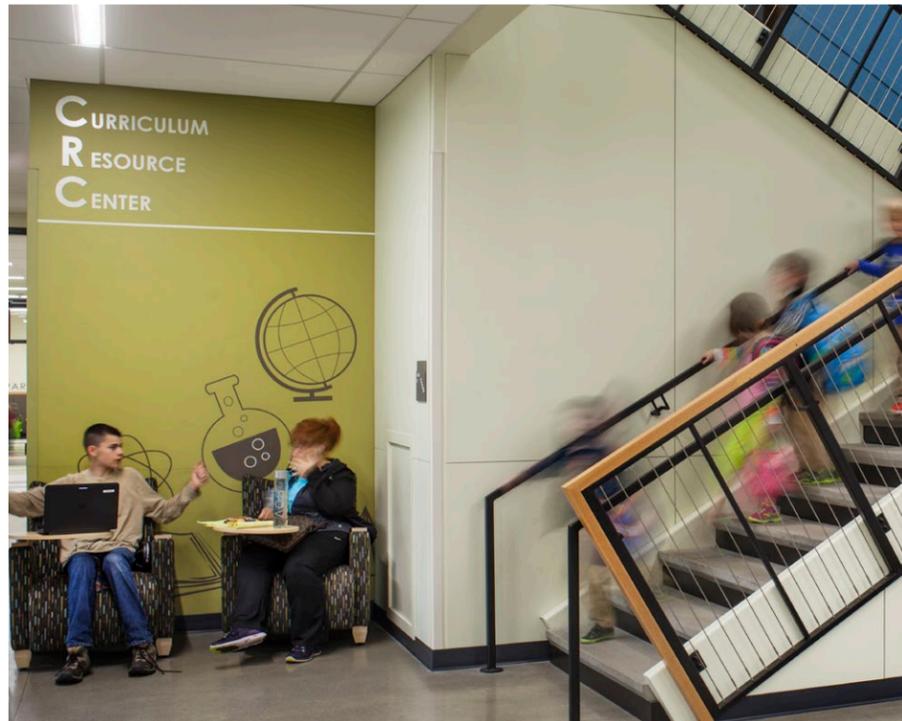
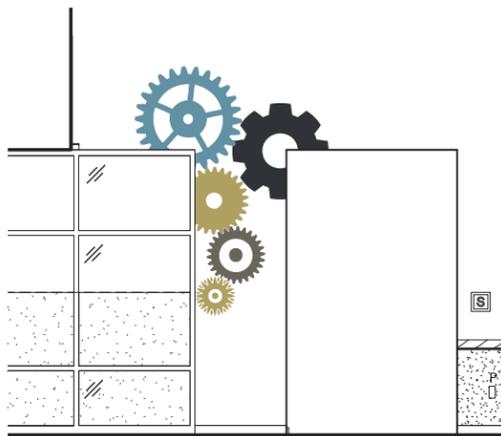
ORLA's branding is expressed through its signage package, adding a layer of finish to convey the school's identity through visual art. Stylish graphics denote key spaces, and subtly underscore the academy's blend of science, nature and the arts.

A separate process overlapped the final stretch of the design, and began with a process of gleaning ideas from which the graphic package is based. Members of the Architect's interior designer group engaged planning committee members in an exercise to explore means for visually representing the identity of ORLA. As an initial step, a survey encouraged participants to describe the emotional response evoked when viewing a series of pre-selected icons. Conversations revolved around the examples prepared by the design team, encouraging exploration of what style and message best represented the beliefs of the school and student body. From the various categories of supergraphics, infographics, icons and words presented, the committee gravitated toward a look described as "playful," and stepped back from the more popular trend described as "giant" and "sleek."

As one example, the goal for the administration area was to communicate the words "inviting," "sunny," and "serious." For some, these adjectives conjured the image of a sunflower, and this idea evolved into an interlocking gear design, (also a representation of brain function). By extrapolating inspiration, words and imagery in this way for other major program areas, the architectural design team turned graphics into whimsical logos with underlying themes of health, brain development, and basic utility.



*Inspirational imagery for the "gear" design at the Admin Office.
Image by depositphotos.*



The added value of GC/CM

After the GC/CM's added expertise contributed toward the selection of the preferred design concept, the General Contractor played a shared role with the design team in analyzing the numerous short and long-term trade-offs of the materials and systems, based on the pursuit of providing greatest value to the Owner. All major building systems - large (the building envelope), and small (interior finish materials) were vetted based on initial affordability vs. long-term performance, and how their inclusion would contribute toward the net-zero ready and other sustainability goals.

Given the budget constraints, the team approached planning and design in a conservative manner. This attitude - paired with the creative thinking by its participants - paid off. During construction the GC/CM assisted in "bringing back" scope items (roof deck planters and pavers, and gas and air in the science classrooms, as examples) that had been removed through value engineering. Building and site features thought to be beyond the budget were set aside during design, then later resurrected as savings were realized. As scope items came back, each were celebrated, as they represented the further realization of project objectives.

GC/CM input also led toward the project being built in two phases, a strategy that advanced the site work and building foundation package ahead of the finalization of the building's design. This move accelerated the schedule overall, which allowed the school to open six months early and capture the savings from the reduced duration of the design and construction schedule.

Conclusion

In the face of all challenges and obstacles, teamwork exercised throughout the design and construction process helped achieve great success. Working together to meet the needs of the School District and ORLA's programs within the given parameters, led to an inclusive and intriguing process, and what we believe is an outstanding result. The upcoming section ('Results') illustrates how the building and site are further designed to support the principles of flexibility, adaptability, longevity, and the opportunity for outdoor education, all contributors toward the delivery of a 21st century education.

As awareness of the importance of green school design increases amongst the public - and the drive toward achieving forward-thinking school facilities continues - Districts throughout the region are taking notice of the Olympia Regional Learning Academy as inspiration for future-planned projects.

3 RESULTS

DESIGN DATA

Site size:	8.25 acres
Parking stalls:	153
Building area:	66,023 SF
Classrooms:	3 ext + 27 interior
Capacity:	600 students; 200 parents; 70 staff

“What is it?”

This question was posed by ORLA’s Administrator as a means of conveying her community’s desire for a design aesthetic far removed from the predictable vernacular of standard educational architecture. As though these words were to come from a casual passer-by, this question served to challenge the designers to seek a fresh interpretation for the site and school.

The building’s position on the site, color and finish palette, and artistic landscape connect the facility to its surrounding residential neighborhood. Neutral, natural materials support a confident massing, and the school house red accent paint - selected in part to acknowledge its predecessor, M^cKinley Elementary - boldly announces ORLA’s presence in the community.

WHAT IT IS...





WELCOMING.

The double-height main entry greets visitors with color, daylight, texture and vibrancy. The sense of welcome is paired with a means of security from supervision, in part from the adjacency of the transparent main office to the entry lobby.

The configuration of the circulatory system provides visibility and eases access. Each of the three schools maintains an independent schedule - with pre-schoolers, primary/secondary students, and parents accessing the building throughout the day - and separate zoning maintains security and order amongst the various user groups.

ORLA's curved entry canopy makes apparent the main entry, providing a day-lit, temporary shelter for those waiting outdoors.



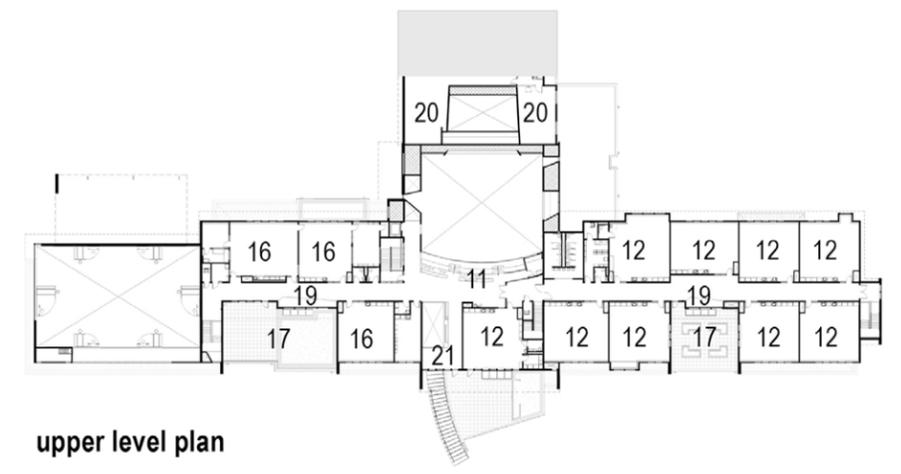
“ On many occasions community members, parents and staff have said, this building feels different; it is so welcoming.”

Julie Randich, ORLA Program Manager





- 1 main entry/lobby
- 2 administration
- 3 teen room
- 4 curriculum resource center
- 5 toddler room
- 6 stroller parking
- 7 gymnasium
- 8 parent kitchen
- 9 commons
- 10 platform/music
- 11 balcony
- 12 general learning
- 13 science
- 14 cooking
- 15 art/projects
- 16 digital lab
- 17 outdoor learning
- 18 kitchen/service
- 19 break-out (lounge)
- 20 electrical/mechanical
- 21 gallery



upper level plan

SAFE & SECURE.

ORLA's individual school programs welcome their users into distinct building zones. Beyond proximities and adjacencies to each other, their position in the building brings additional benefits that may be somewhat less apparent.

As an upper floor school, ORLA Montessori benefits from high ceilings and ample daylight. Its separate entrance is accessed through a private stair positioned East of the administrative office. To the West and also upstairs, the iConnect program and Online Development Center (ODC) share needs related to high-tech use. Digital labs and recording room are positioned in a largely North-facing location, where the ability to control light levels assists in the recording and viewing of electronic media.

The largest of the schools, hConnect, occupies much of the ground level for many reasons: functions within the resource center, science, cooking, and art rooms rely on a continual flow of supplies, and thus benefit from their proximity to the kitchen, entrance doors and service drive. hConnect also sees the coming and going of building users more frequently throughout the day, thus a direct relationship to the main entry and parking supports this continuous flow, within clear view of the administrative office.

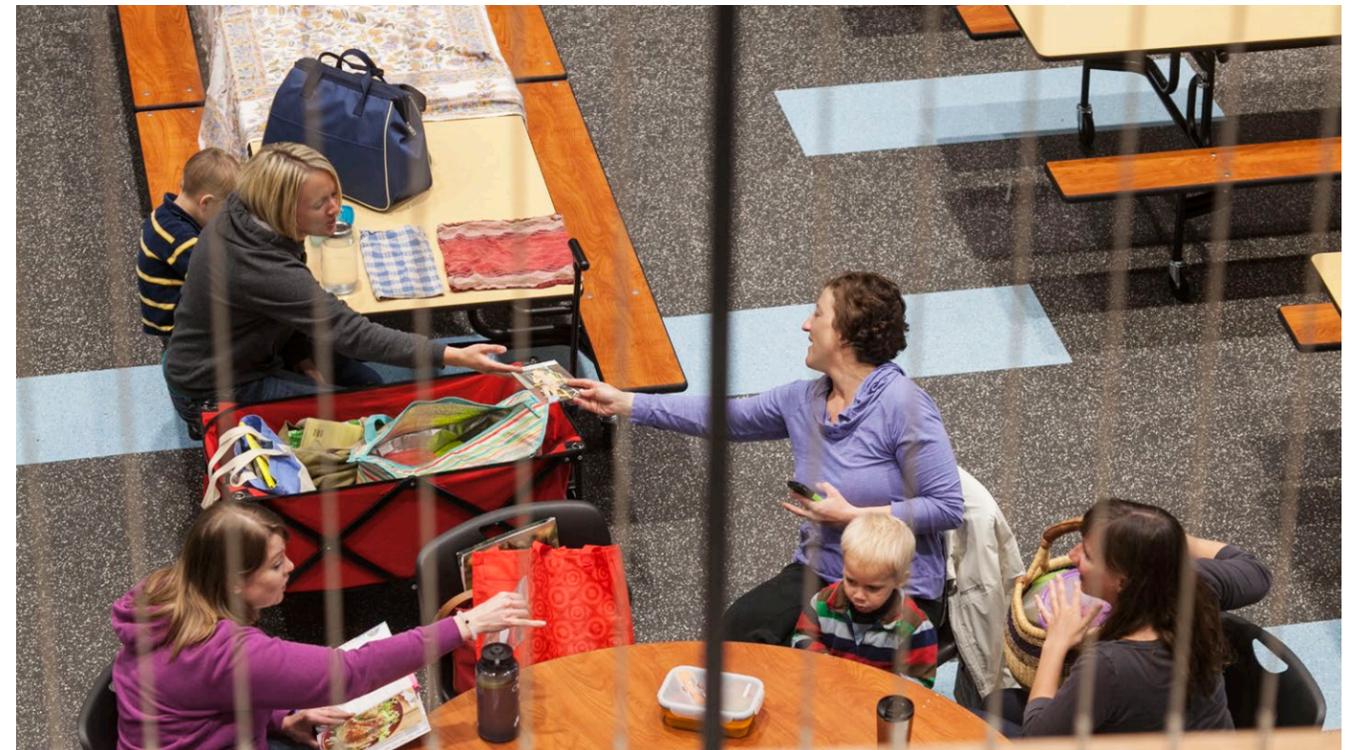
The "front and center" position of the administration office serves as a control point for the academy. Visibility from this node allows its occupants to have "eyes on the street," in addition to its parking, rain gardens, entry lobby, main stair, commons and more. Lock down of the building's perimeter and wings is achievable in an emergent situation.



FAMILY ORIENTED.

ORLA offers many means of promoting student interaction and family involvement.

- Use of special purpose spaces (cooking classroom, roof gardens, science labs) between school programs and other building users is encouraged, and their locations within the academy provide convenient access.
- The CRC (Curriculum Resource Center) is more than a library; the books, games, and teaching materials can be checked out by school staff, students and parents for use in the classroom, on-site or at home.
- Break-out lounges dot the corridors, creating waiting areas for parents, small learning environments, and areas for casual socialization outside of the classroom.
- Café tables line the arced window wall at the entry gallery for space to wait, mingle, eat and study within view of the commons.
- A parent-use kitchenette also opens to the commons, for use in basic prep and warming of food brought from home.
- To assist parents in keeping younger siblings occupied, a play area with nearby changing amenities and infant nap room make up the space known as the "Toddler Room."
- A "stroller parking lot" designates temporary storage for strollers and wagons, a useful means of conveying children and supplies across campus.
- Adolescents can hang out and socialize in "The Safe," a destination for eating and study that feels less "managed," fostering a sense of independence.





1



2



3



4

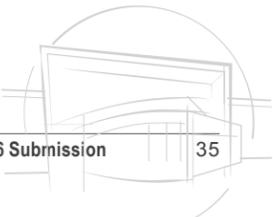


5

ACCOMMODATING.

Practical Amenities

1. The built-in kiosk is positioned centrally within the intersection of the main corridors, creating the effect of a traffic circle.
2. The Key Cafe (school store) opens on two sides - to the main corridor and the teen room.
3. Adjacent to the school store, "The Safe" is a designated teen hang out.
4. Stroller parking provides temporary storage of wheeled vehicles.
5. Dispersed technology allows for on-line access from any point in the building. This lets students, parents and staff utilize the many break-out spaces and other areas, for study, work and recreation.



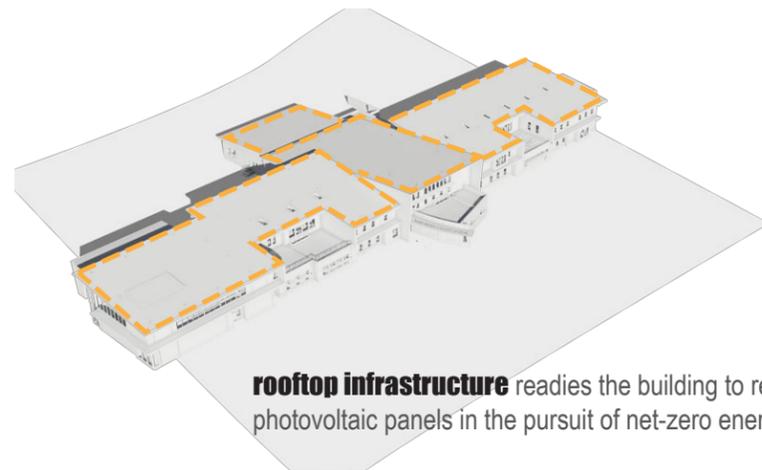
BEAUTIFUL, WARM, COMFORTABLE.

To achieve a “home-like” feel within the large public facility, the interior finishes provide interplay among textures, tones and patterns. The palette of light and medium grays is punctuated by vibrant-but-earthy hues. One of the project’s few “premium” materials, clear sealed oak is used as a quasi-residential detail, capping the wainscot and wrapping the key features in public space.

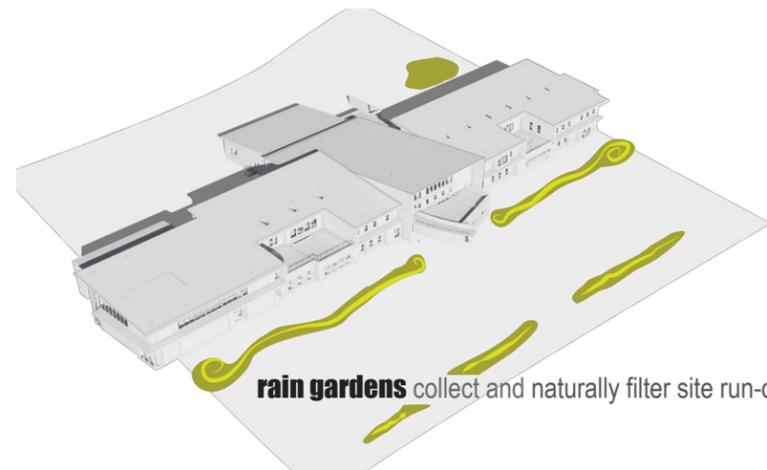


The upper floor gallery space offers more choice in areas to dine. During the busy mid-day, it is a place where parents can be seen reconnecting with their children while eating together picnic-style. Students with food allergies can enjoy lunch a safe distance from those in the commons. Kids sensitive to noise and activity can find quieter space here.

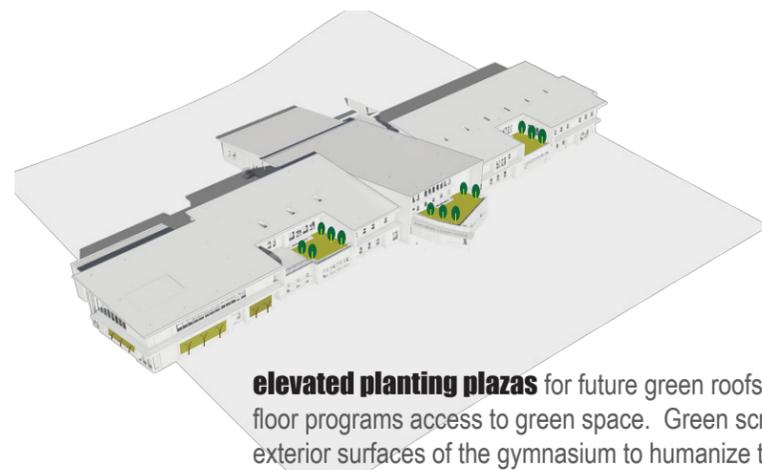




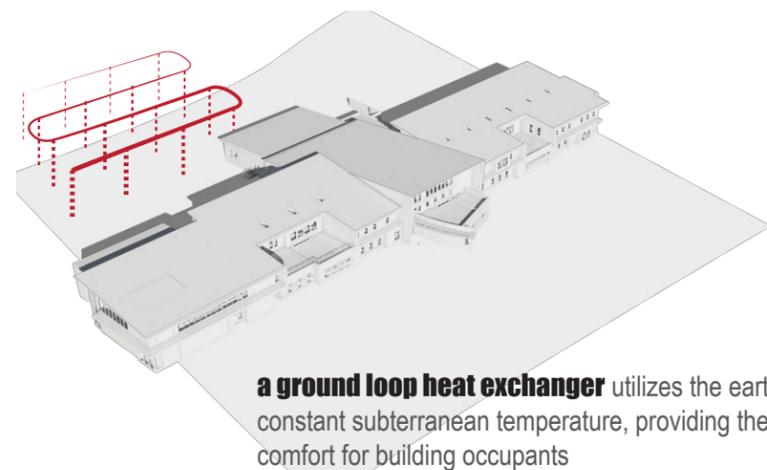
rooftop infrastructure readies the building to receive photovoltaic panels in the pursuit of net-zero energy status



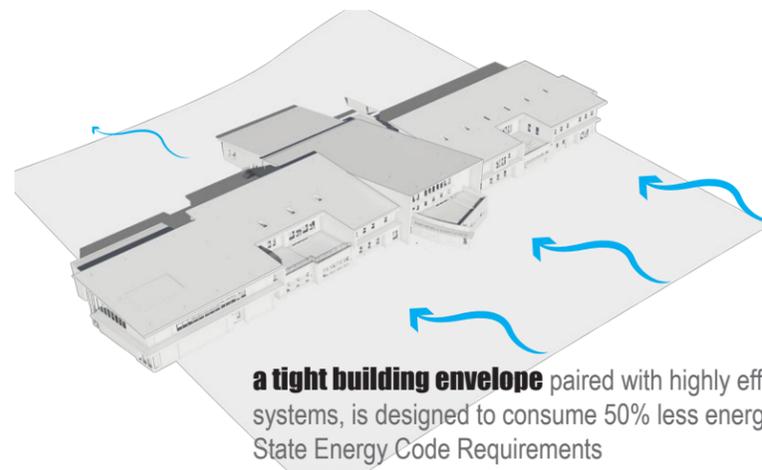
rain gardens collect and naturally filter site run-off



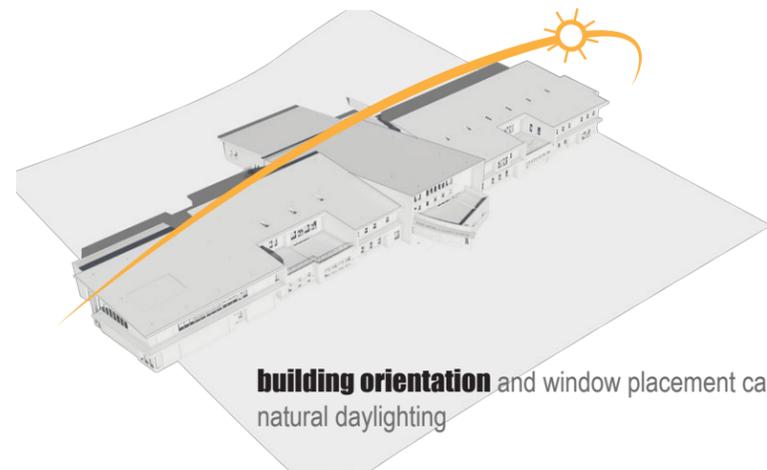
elevated planting plazas for future green roofs give upper floor programs access to green space. Green screens wrap exterior surfaces of the gymnasium to humanize the scale



a ground loop heat exchanger utilizes the earth's near constant subterranean temperature, providing thermal comfort for building occupants



a tight building envelope paired with highly efficient systems, is designed to consume 50% less energy than current State Energy Code Requirements



building orientation and window placement capture natural daylighting

SUSTAINABLE.

Creativity and teamwork contributed toward bringing the high performance building into range of achieving a cost-efficient, net-zero energy ready status, resulting in one of the top sustainable facilities in the State. Beyond the baseline considerations of orientation, exposure, and energy efficient infrastructure, ORLA's sustainable strategies include:

- Rooftop infrastructure that readies the building for future photovoltaic panel installation, a component of completing the net-zero energy ready system;
- A ground loop heat exchanger that utilizes the earth's near constant subterranean temperature to provide thermal comfort for building occupants;
- A tight building envelope paired with highly efficient systems, designed to consume 50% less energy than current State Energy Code Requirements. At last calculation, the EUI (Energy Use Intensity) resulted in a figure of 19.27;
- Rain gardens collect and naturally filter site run-off while creating a garden-like environment;
- Elevated planting plazas for future green roofs, giving the upper floor access to green space;
- Living walls wrap the exterior surfaces of the gymnasium to reduce visual scale and emphasize the District's commitment to environmentally responsible design.

With a design that far exceeds the WSSP-required 45 points, and with plans to further increase its sustainability through the addition of photovoltaic panels to the PV-ready roof, ORLA provides its community-within and the surrounding neighborhood with an excellent example of beauty and sustainability melded to create the "3-D textbook" originally envisioned.



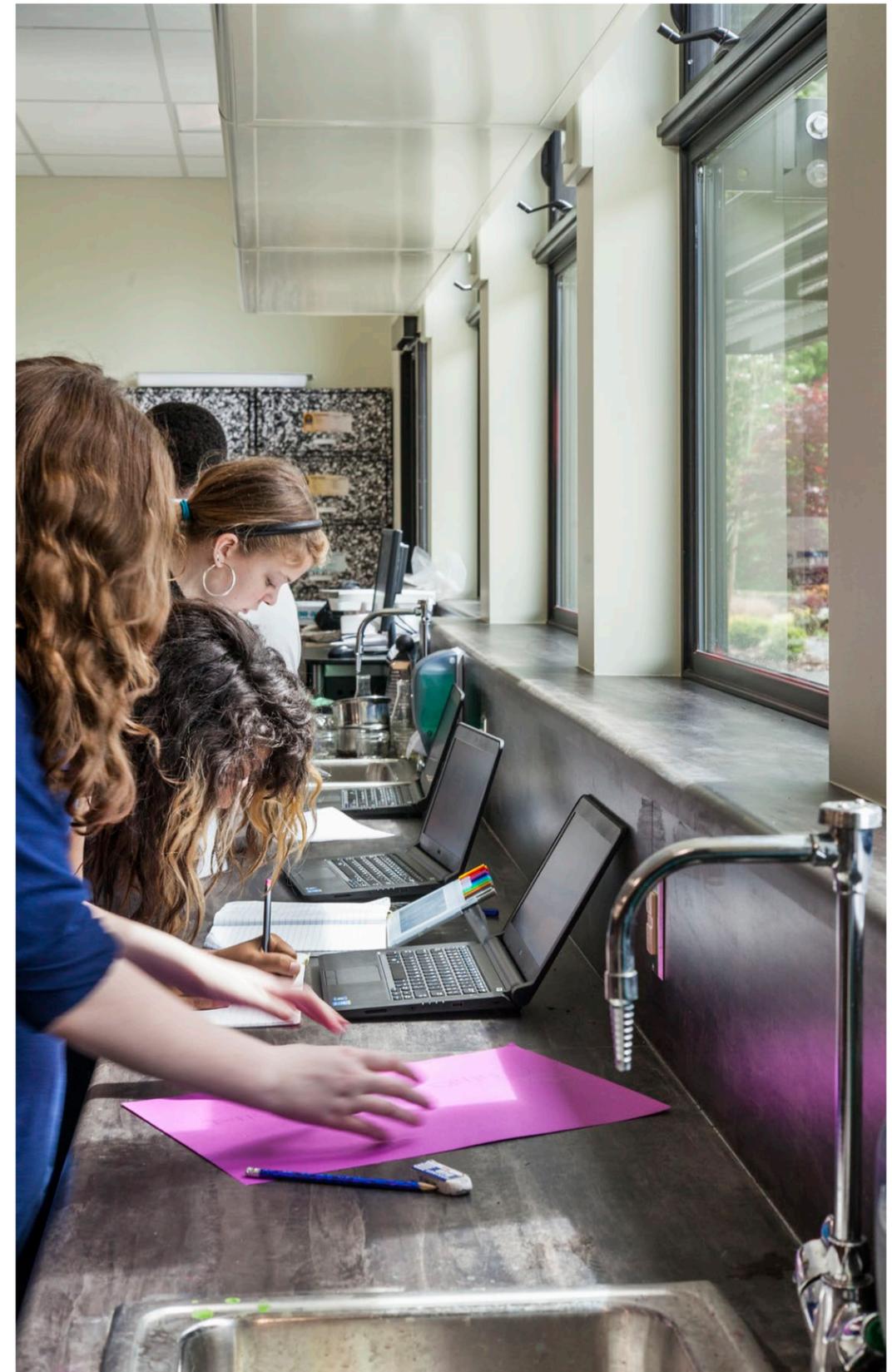


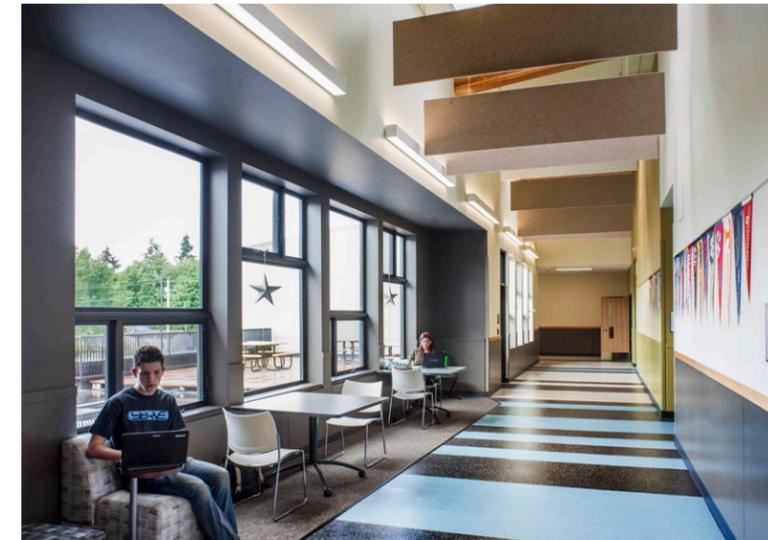
MULTI-USE, FLEXIBLE, ADAPTABLE.

A variety of indoor and outdoor spaces provide venues for play, performance, experimentation, creativity and social interaction.

Flexible classrooms are suited for use by all ages. Spaces may hold classes for primary grades in the morning, and high-schoolers later in the afternoon; the furniture, equipment and storage facilitate this fluctuation.

The structural, mechanical, electrical systems have been designed to anticipate future modification/addition in response to ORLA's soaring popularity.



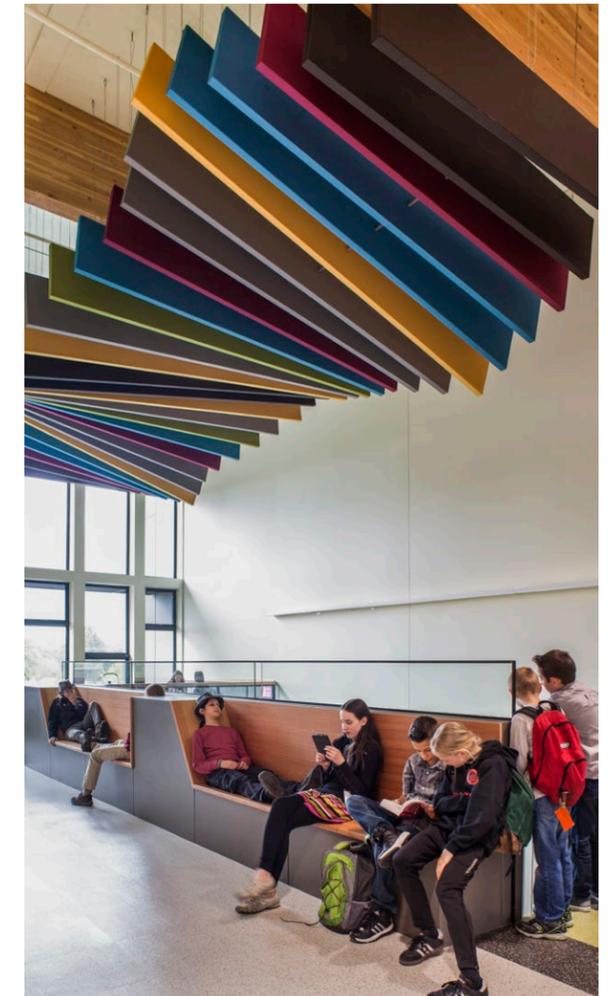


FLOOR BANDING

The intrusion of basaltic magma into oceanic ridges creates a sea floor banding effect, a geologic concept represented in the corridors' linear floor patterns.

SOUND CLOUD

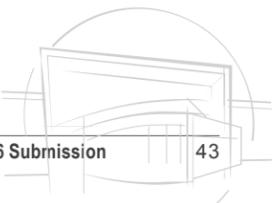
Inspired by the form of a sound wave, the acoustic panel configuration brings color and playfulness to the main entry and upper gallery.



CONDUCTIVE TO BRAIN DEVELOPMENT.

ORLA's design is forward thinking, placing emphasis on wholistic wellness, multiple intelligences, project-based learning and connections with nature.

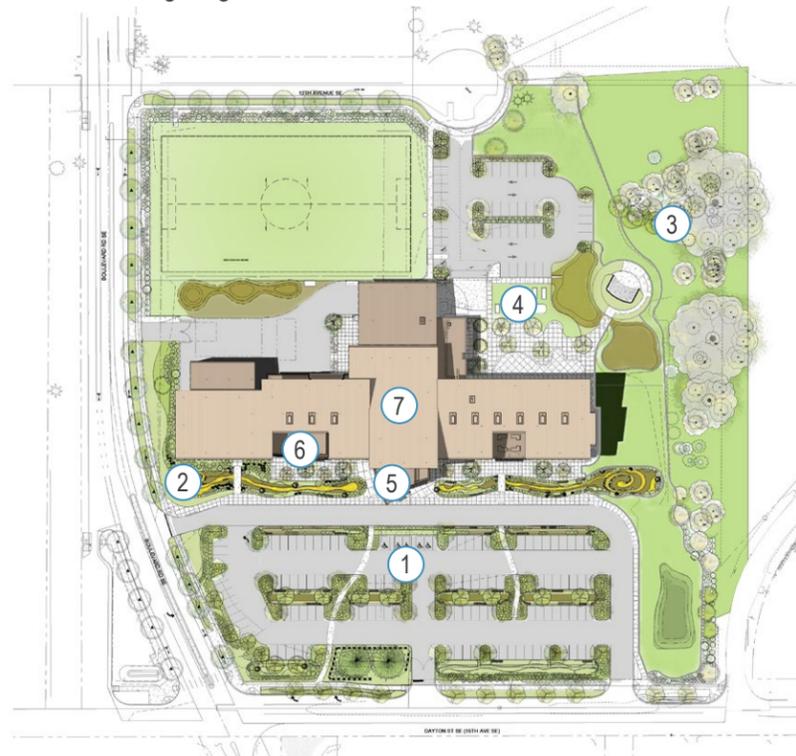
- Digital labs can host lectures on-site, and utilize technology to transmit and receive lessons that make information available to students throughout the region.
- The culinary education classroom (pictured at left), is a venue for teaching an important life skill and the value of nutrition; lessons bridge the connection to the produce grown in the on-site student gardens.
- Gardens, science labs, the gymnasium and outdoor play areas support lessons in horticulture, science, and physical education.
- Art/project labs are spaces that also allow students to get wet and messy from "hands on" learning.



CONNECTED TO THE OUTDOORS.

There are a number of ways the school connects the building to its outdoor environment:

1. Rain gardens weaving throughout the main front lot break up the paved surface and buffer the building from parking. Once matured, the rain gardens will serve as an area for outdoor exploration.
2. The vertical trellis at the gymnasium façade is a structure for climbing plants, a strategy to assist in visually softening the large building mass at the activities wing.
3. Mature vegetation at the site's northeastern quadrant screens the property from nearby residences, and partially envelopes space reserved for an outdoor art plaza or gathering space.
4. A planting area is reserved at the North of the site for the cultivation of student gardens.
5. Roof garden patios provide easy access to nature for upper level programs.
6. Areas of roof envelope are designed and detailed for the future planting of "green roofs." Once installed, second floor classrooms and corridors will benefit from the close proximity of green space.
7. Due in part to its centralized position on the site, the building offers many vantage points as overlooks to the vegetated site and surrounding neighborhood.





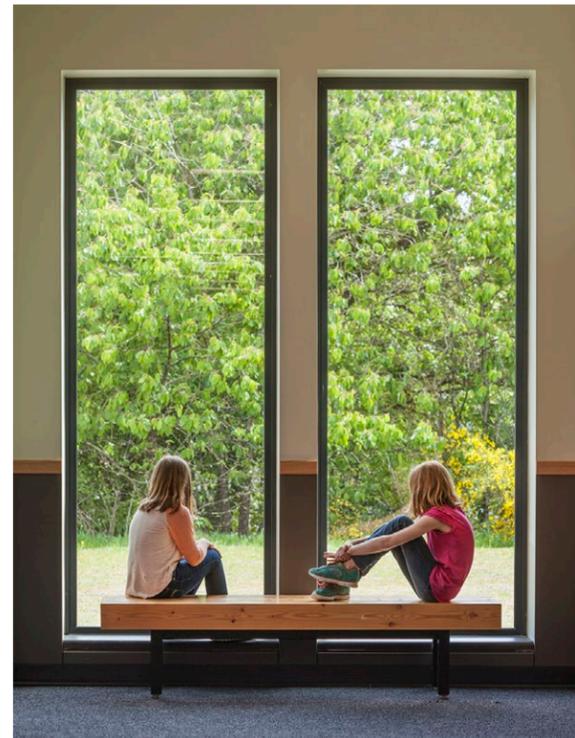
“ Outside user groups request to use our facility on a daily basis. Our gym is used by the YMCA, community youth basketball and volleyball teams and our field will be open this spring for local soccer groups. The classrooms have been used by local neighborhood associations and camp fire girls. Having these additional spaces for our community has been such a value.”

Julie Randich, ORLA Program Manager

REFLECTIVE OF COMMUNITY.

Designed to weave seamlessly into the fabric of its neighborhood community, the school also extends the invitation for use to others outside of its walls. ORLA's gym and the commons, located near designated parking, offer interior zoning independent from the rest of the building. The layout of its interior make it easy to navigate, and its systems (heating, cooling, lighting, technology) simplify operation, with the intent to ease use for those less familiar with the building. ORLA's play fields, art plaza, gardens and parking lots are also offered up as amenities for use by both the school and neighborhood community.

The commons, also available for use by individuals from outside organizations, represents the physical and metaphorical “heart” of ORLA, bringing together its school community through art, music, food service and performance.



“ It has added a lot to the Olympia area.”

“It is nice to see the parking lot full and the kids enjoying the playground.”

Conrad and Treva Brock, Long-time Olympia Residents

