



A4LE MacConnell Award Project Dossier

Pacific Sky School
June 9th, 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With this 65,000 sf K-6 elementary school, the District challenges conventional prototypes. By prioritizing the students, the District aims to create a learning environment that fosters growth and supports the overall development of all 450 children. Students are not confined to traditional classroom boundaries. They are encouraged to engage in experiential learning, hands-on activities, and real-world applications of their knowledge. This approach allows them to see the practical relevance of their education and fosters a deeper understanding of concepts.

“The heart of the surrounding neighborhood, alive with rich culture and robust educational program!”

- Take 2 | Five Standout Accomplishments





GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Pacific Sky School is an inspiring elementary school that fosters a positive learning environment for students, teachers, and the community. As their 9th campus, this "heart" of the neighborhood exemplifies the District's overarching goals for their entire District, transforming the traditional models for both instruction and learning environment.

Motivating Environment

The school provides an environment that motivates both students and staff. The thoughtfully designed spaces provide a sense of calm and connect students to nature, allowing students to feel comfortable and inspired to learn. The school's layout and infrastructure contribute to an engaging atmosphere, stimulating creativity, and encouraging a love for learning.

Collaboration and Connection

Pacific Sky School promotes collaboration and connection beyond the traditional classroom setting. The openness and flexibility of the school's design encourage staff and students to collaborate and connect with one another, fostering a sense of community and teamwork. This collaborative approach enhances the learning experience and allows for the exchange of ideas, leading to deeper understanding and growth.

Catering to Modern Learning Approaches

The school's design is aligned with modern learning and instruction approaches, which have been extensively studied, discussed, and engaged in throughout the District before the school was built. The layout, facilities, and resources are tailored to support and facilitate these innovative teaching and learning methods. This intentional design enables students to actively participate in their education, promotes critical thinking, and cultivates a lifelong love for learning.

Overcoming Design Challenges

Pacific Sky School has overcome design issues that had hindered the learning process in the past. Lessons learned from previous educational spaces have been carefully considered, resulting in a school that eliminates these hindrances. By addressing these challenges, the school ensures that teachers have the tools and environment necessary to provide effective instruction, and students have access to a space that maximizes their learning potential.

Community Engagement

Pacific Sky School actively engages with the surrounding community, creating a mutually beneficial relationship. The school serves as a hub for various community activities, events, and initiatives, fostering a sense of belonging and pride within the community. This involvement allows students to see the real-world applications of their learning and cultivates a sense of civic responsibility and empathy.

SCOPE OF WORK & BUDGET

LOCATION	San Diego, CA
TYPE OF PROJECT	K - 6 New Construction
PROJECT SIZE	+/- 10 ACRES, +/- 70,000 sf building
ACTUAL COST	\$51.1 Million

SCOPE OF WORK

The project was separated into two increments in order to take advantage of overlapping permitting schedules and the cost savings associated. Increment 01 included rough grading of the +/- 10 acre vacant site, with underground utilities, fire service, and construction of site retaining walls. Increment 02 consisted of 70,000 sf of new building construction, including (1) Main Classroom Building (60,065 sf), (1) Kindergarten Building (4,700 sf), (1) After School Program Building (2,583 sf), and (1) Central Kitchen Building (4,300 sf). The Main Classroom Building includes Single Point of Entry into an open Administration space, Innovation Center, Science/Art/Music Studios, Classrooms for 1-6 Grades, and a meandering Learning Commons with open and quiet break out spaces. The site work included Outdoor Learning Spaces, (3) kinetic play structures with resilient surfacing, (3) custom lunch shade shelters (2,800 sf), concrete and asphalt hardscape for play and path, native / low water-use landscaping, including a dedicated bio-retention "river" and basin, and a joint use play field with decomposed granite running track.

BUDGET

The Pacific Sky School project was awarded in May 2021 with a maximum allowable construction budget of \$53,657,152. During the course of design coordination with the Lease-Lease Back Contractor, the project construction schedule was reduced from 20 months to 15 months. The project was completed on time and on budget, despite the reduction in time. The Final Construction Cost for Pacific Sky School, including Site work, Central Kitchen, and Fixtures/Furnishings/Equipment (FFE) was \$51.1 Million, which was within the limits of the approved budget. Approximately \$2.5 Million was returned to the District.





SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RESEARCH

STAKEHOLDERS



School District Leadership



Teachers and Students



Community

Stakeholders included parents, District leadership and teaching staff, general community members, and most importantly, the students of Pacific Sky. District Board Members, Cabinet Members, the Design Team, and community members were engaged through a design thinking process for two years leading up to the design of this campus. When design was underway, all members of the community were invited to be a part of the design process, with 25-45 community members, students, and teachers attending each of four design sessions. Teachers were engaged through a workshop series that informed the design of the Modern Learning Studio and students were given the opportunity to design, provide feedback, and discuss their ideas.

Modern Learning Studio

A right-sized classroom efficiently trimmed of unneeded space, serving as home base for students, with simplified and minimal built-in features, flexible furnishings and technology, and large glazed openings for indoor/outdoor learning with connection to a larger learning commons to allow the classroom and students to spill out and expand into the communal space.

COMMUNITY

The vibrant community resides in a recently developed neighborhood situated at the eastern edge of the School District boundaries. Previously, residents were assigned to a school a few miles westward, which necessitated traversing heavily congested areas during school commutes. The community is characterized by its diversity, boasting a sizable Asian-American population. Furthermore, it represents one of the higher socio-economically diverse populations within our district, as evidenced by the significant number of students benefiting from free and reduced-price meal programs at the new school.

CHALLENGES

While the engagement process proved to be a notable strength, it posed a challenge to design a framework inclusive of all community members who desired to participate, given the dynamic nature of attendance at each meeting. While some attendees remained consistent, others joined at different stages throughout the process.

ASSETS

District staff and design firm brought a large staffing asset to this project. Multiple members of the design team attended each meeting, and all of the District Cabinet, as well as a number of school site principals attended District planning meetings, workshops, and community meetings. This prioritized engagement from leadership and the design team illustrated the commitment to the community and the process.

Years leading up to this campus' development, the District set out to redefine their educational goals District-wide and developed new guiding principles as well as updated their facilities master plan. Having developed this update, the design firm had hands on knowledge of the District's vision, with years of collaboration, research and design thinking ahead of Pacific Sky School.

The District also modernized two existing campuses with test Pilots, exploring design and function of the Modern Learning Studio, Learning Commons, and the Innovation Center. Professional development for staff was ongoing as teachers and principals engaged in re-framing teaching styles to align with this modern approach.

Place Matters

As the District's mission statement says, the District exists "to ignite genius and empower students to advance the world." To achieve this mission, the District documented three levers to identify the method by which to achieve this mission, one of which is the Environment.

"The physical environment of a school or classroom will influence how individuals interact, their behaviors, and their performance. It is the 'third' teacher. The physical space should inspire the work of groups and individuals."

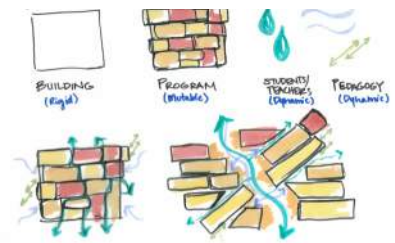


COLLABORATION, COLLEGIALITY, CONNECTION

VALUE OF PROCESS & COMMUNITY

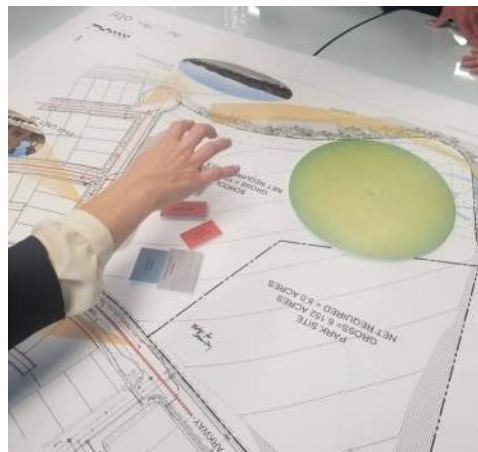
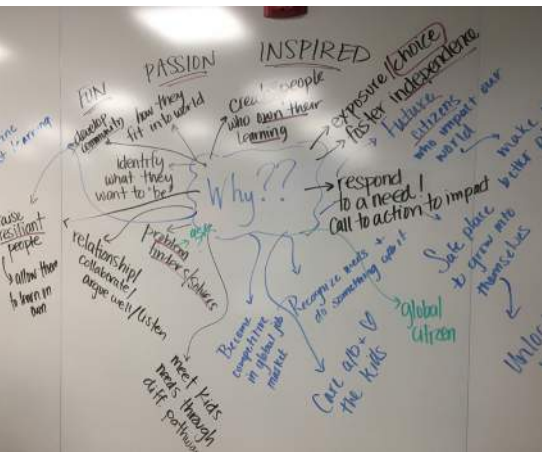
The community highly valued both the project and the associated process. The community collaborated with the District and neighboring communities, working together to fiercely advocate and successfully pass a facilities bond for their own neighborhood school. Following the idea of *Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion* from the outset of the process, as the District extended invitations to all community members interested in participating, the response was exceptional. The community displayed extraordinary engagement, heartfelt appreciation, and contagious excitement.

The Design Firm presented design ideas and gathered input, and District Staff engaged the participants in a Thinking Routine called “See, Think, Wonder” to elicit feedback and gather input. In addition, District staff engaged all students in a Design Thinking challenge around designing their ideal school. At some grade spans, this looked like students designing a playground or a classroom, and for older students, it included full school designs. These designs were displayed and reviewed by staff and architect and helped to inform some of the design.



Exploration
 • Ownership
 • Independence
 • Momentum/ENERGY!
 • OPENED => Void-place of wonder, activity
 ... no further visible spaces created/defined ...

FORCE OF NATURE!
 • Carve, create
 • Fine path
 • Create SPACE/PLACE/PATHS



EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

VISION AND GOALS

The educational vision for the school centers around students experiencing joy in their learning while having opportunities to unleash their personal genius in a supportive, flexible learning environment. Staff collaborate around how to most effectively use the learning spaces in order to develop a culture of thinking where students build a strong academic base while also having opportunities to explore with ownership of their daily experience.

21ST CENTURY LEARNING

- **ONE INTERCONNECTED BUILDING FOSTERS USE OF CIRCULATION AS EXTENDED LEARNING SPACE**
Allowing for free-flowing movement of students, faculty, and staff, and creative use of interior circulation as extended learning space
- **MODERN LEARNING STUDIOS SET THE STAGE FOR INTERACTIVE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS**
Education in thoughtful, innovative forms
- **DESIGN ENCOURAGES STUDENT CHOICE FOR A DYNAMIC AND UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCE**
All students experience the same access and ability to discover and learn. Allowing each and every student to be a force of nature.

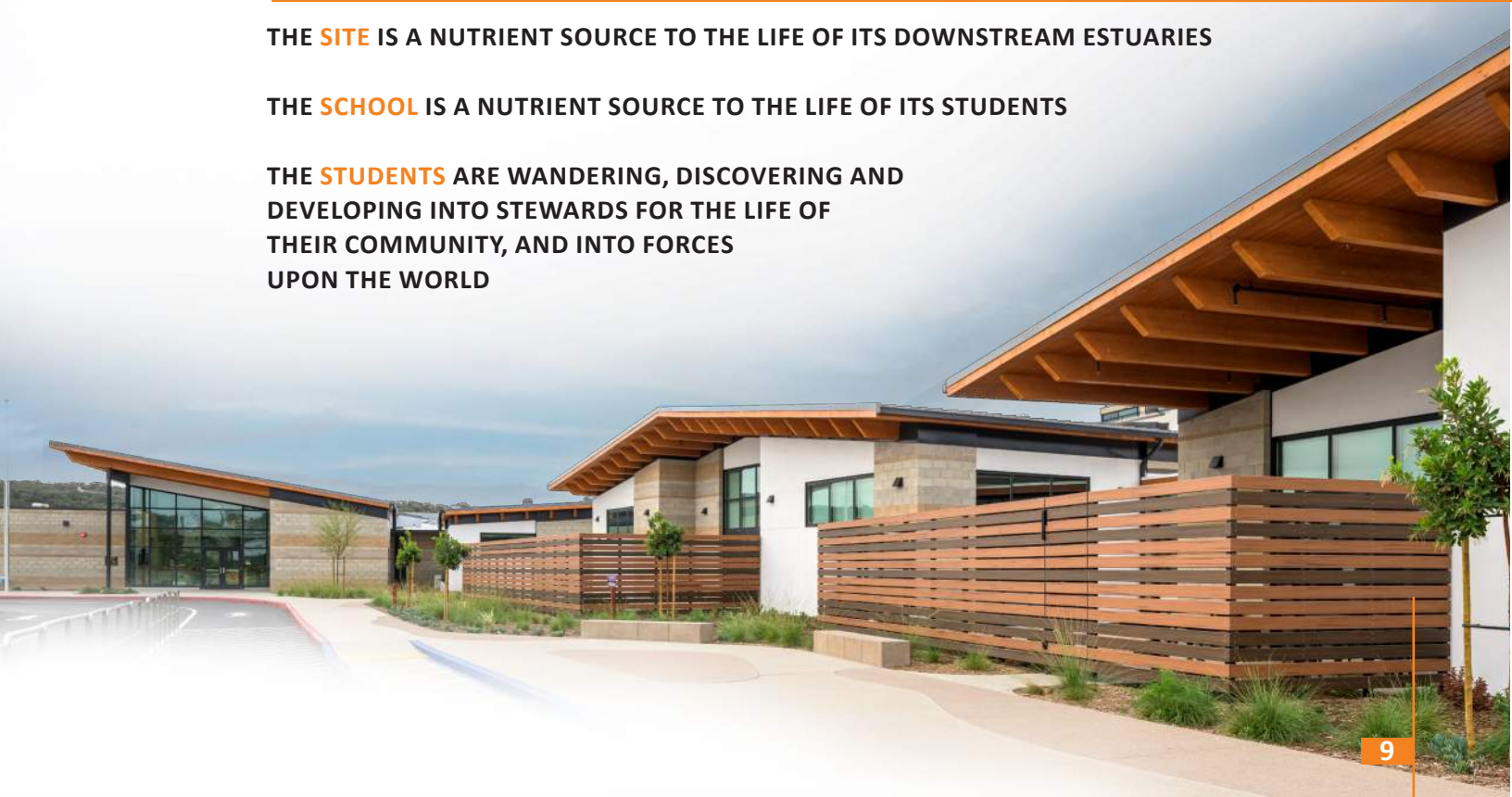
LEARNING HAPPENS EVERYWHERE

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

THE **SITE** IS A NUTRIENT SOURCE TO THE LIFE OF ITS DOWNSTREAM ESTUARIES

THE **SCHOOL** IS A NUTRIENT SOURCE TO THE LIFE OF ITS STUDENTS

THE **STUDENTS** ARE WANDERING, DISCOVERING AND
DEVELOPING INTO STEWARDS FOR THE LIFE OF
THEIR COMMUNITY, AND INTO FORCES
UPON THE WORLD



LEGEND

- CLASSROOM K-6
- CLASSROOM SPECIALTY
- CLASSROOM SERVICE
- INNOVATION CENTER
- COLLABORATION SPACE
- FOCUS SPACE
- ACTIVE CORRIDOR
- ADMIN./TEACHER SPACE
- KITCHEN
- RESTROOM
- STORAGE/CUSTODIAL UTILITY
- SEATING NOOKS
- FENCING



FLOOR PLAN

All buildings are single story to minimize scale and impact on views to the canyon. To achieve the District's educational vision, all classrooms and supporting spaces are within one interconnected building, allowing dual use of circulation space as extended learning space.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN principles inform the use of widened sloped walkways and ramps throughout the campus to gracefully navigate the site's grade changes. All students experience the same access and ability to discover and learn. With this, the design concept centers on students' movement throughout the building and their development into positive forces for the world. A Single Point of Entry not only provides for enhanced student and faculty safety but also offers equitable access to the campus.



INNOVATION CENTER

The traditional multi-purpose room is re-imagined as the Center of campus, serving as a hub for various learning activities, accommodating small group sessions, whole-class instruction, grade-level projects, and school wide initiatives. It offers flexible areas for robotics, computers, presentations, and reading nooks. Circulation space is transformed into break-out collaboration and creation areas, with traditional library space transformed into a meandering collection, that stretches throughout campus. The site's changes in grade are celebrated through the length of the space with large sloped walkways, defined by undulating wood seating areas, recessed storage and playful seating cubbies that students are encouraged to climb on top, inside, and use as canvas for presentation and collaboration.

ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS CURRICULUM

The environment supports the curriculum and educational vision through the creation of flexible spaces that students from different classes and age groups co-inhabit. Learning bleeds beyond the traditional boundaries of their homeroom "class" as students purposefully use the learning commons and outdoor learning spaces to collaborate with peers, work individually, and/or connect with other students.

The Innovation Center was purposefully designed to move away from a traditional elementary school Multi-Purpose Room that is only used sporadically, often for evening events or adults, to a truly innovative and cross connected space that is utilized every day by students throughout the school. While the Innovation Center houses a large number of books, the library is decentralized, with smaller divisions of the collection spread throughout the building. It also is an area where the Innovation Technologist creates mobile lab stations, robotics lessons, and integrates the surrounding areas as break out spaces for group and individual learning sessions.

Art, Science, and Music rooms are connected to the Innovation Center and are sometimes used for individual groups of students, and at other times, they are open to the larger space, with glass accordion doors, for student groups to break out into the Center for expanded space or for presentations. A performance stage is also located at one end and can be closed off entirely through the use of an operable wall to allow for acoustic separation.

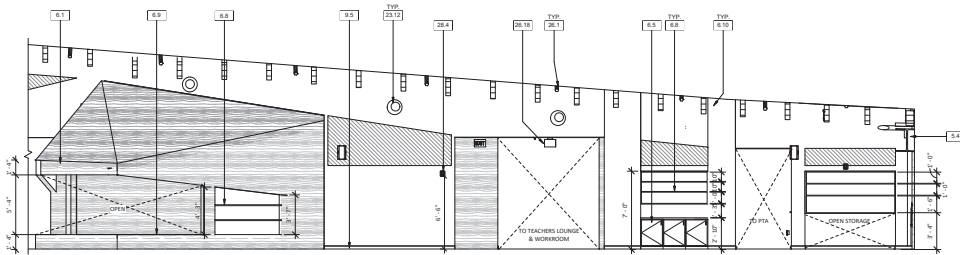
"Technology facilitates the purposeful integration of learning between subjects, throughout the day, and across the school site in order to individualize learning and allow for student choice. Through training and regular use of technology staff are experts in ensuring that the right technology tool is used to provide our students with opportunities to learn and share knowledge that would otherwise be unimaginable. A culture is clearly established around the willingness to embrace new ideas and proactively use technology by continually infusing local and global best practices, current trends, and future projections into all conversations about teaching and learning." - District Vision for Technology



Student learning extends to the outside, with outdoor learning spaces that directly connect to each classroom, outdoor amphitheater spaces that allow for gathering or presentation, and play spaces and structures that encourage students to explore, climb, and move their bodies. A playful connection to nature is fostered through wood-log style benches, slides to traverse from upper to lower levels, and storm water treatment areas that are integrated into the landscape throughout the campus.

ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS VARIETY

Various learning and teaching styles are supported not only through the District's educational vision, but through the Pacific Sky School's campus. Flexible learning spaces with comfortable, age-appropriate furniture allow options for students and staff both in the learning studio and in the learning commons. Collaboration happens purposefully and accidentally between students in different learning studios, and across grade levels because the built environment fosters openness and opportunity to gather in various ways or to discover as an individual. The Innovation Center can be used for a small group, a whole class, an entire grade level, or school wide learning opportunities.



SECTION
INNOVATION CENTER



“DESIGN FUNDAMENTALS

In the development of the prototypes, it became apparent that the District's vision for their educational programming and physical environments is in line with the fundamentals of great architectural design. These architectural fundamentals apply to all habitable environments. However, in educational design they have been studied extensively and have proven to significantly benefit the educational and emotional development of children. As such, design for Del Mar's Modern Learning Spaces must be holistic in its approach, and include access to light, air, the exterior environment, varied learning zones, and varied / flexible work spaces.

Numerous studies have been performed of environmental impacts on student performance and healthy schools. While many studies are observational and anecdotal, all studies return with similar conclusions. Connection to the outdoors and students' ownership of their classroom environment have been noted to play an important role in their development. Natural daylight; controlled ventilation, both natural and mechanical; views to the outdoors; flexible classroom set up; and varied / comfort focused furnishings all play a POSITIVE role on students' learning and progress.

It is easy to lose sight of even the simplest measures that can bring greater quality to our everyday working and learning environments, not realizing how great our experience can be until it is changed and we are transformed. These elements are not “nice-to-haves” but are “must-haves” for future learning facilities. Implementing these student-focused measures will have a positive effect on students' academic performance as well as their health, well-being, and excitement for learning. Integrating fundamental elements of design is essential to any built environment and is imperative for students of the future.

-District Facilities Master Plan Update 2018

MODERN LEARNING STUDIO

The modern learning studio turns the traditional classroom upside down and centers its focus on the learner's best environment for success. Natural daylight through operable glazed walls and clerestory windows support a connection to the outdoors and a healthy learning environment. Flexible furnishings accommodate various age groups in scale, height, and layout. Adjustable, standing desks, soft seating, movable stations, and various teaching areas for both student and staff allow for dynamic instruction. Direction connection to outdoor learning spaces and the learning commons gives students choice and connects them to the greater community of which they are apart. Each studio space is designed to engage with the student, inspire the staff, and encourage joy in learning.



ENVIRONMENT FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility and adaptability is evidenced in several ways throughout the campus.

Modern Learning Studios

Each classroom's furnishings allow reconfiguration as needed and flexibility to move within and beyond the learning studio. Folding glass walls open or close to the Learning Commons and/or outdoors. The classroom is designed without a "front" to the classroom to allow for student agency and teacher flexibility.

Learning Commons

Furnishings allow reconfiguration of spaces as needed and flexibility to move around, creating space for large or small groups. Built-in nooks allow for individual use or group learning. Stepped seating areas allow for students to study, sketch, present, or work together. Students are encouraged to cross paths, make their own, or forge new paths together.

Innovation Center

The Innovation Center has three STEAM+ rooms, a large space with multiple meeting areas, a stage, and the ability to close the stage area off to flexibly adapt to the needs of the school community.



INNOVATION IN ENVIRONMENT

The educational environment is innovative in it's own right, with the flexible nature of the learning studios, access to large learning commons, and access to the outdoors

- In addition, and most importantly, the culture of thinking that is developed by the staff and students in the school is what makes the space truly innovative. Without professional learning for all staff, a focus on student-centered learning, and leadership from the principal and teacher leaders, an innovative space like this could just as easily be used like any other school in the country.*

“ Our focus on creating cultures of thinking for every child and adult in the district comes to life through day-to-day moment-to-moment interactions with content that's presented in a meaningful relevant way.



RESULTS OF THE PROCESS & PROJECT

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Pacific Sky School provides a learning space that matches the District's vision. Flexible, adaptable, comfortable, student-sized spaces cater to the development of a culture of thinking and make it easy to develop a program that allows for student choice and exploration. When you walk in the front door, you are immediately engaged in the educational buzz. With its many opportunities for discovery, it is kid-friendly and fun!

SCHOOL DISTRICT GOALS

First and foremost, the District's goals are the educational goals. Beyond the educational goals, the District strives to be a good community partner, and works to provide community schools that are central to the community in which they are situated. Broad community input, collaboration, and support throughout the design process met a District goal, and we are seeing that support and collaboration turn into an engaged school community now that the school is open.



COMMUNITY GOALS

The community was promised a school by the developer, but it was not always planned by the District. Passage of a school bond and collaboration with the community led to the design and construction of what has become a central piece of this community and a statement school for the district that demonstrates the impact of an innovative, student-centered school coupled with high-quality professional learning and instruction.

UNINTENDED RESULTS

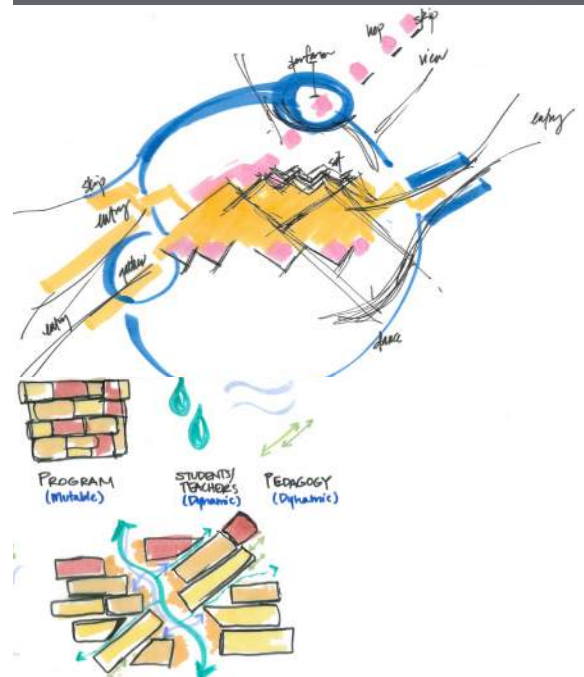
Much of what the District set out to do was truly realized through this project, having spent several years in research, case study exploration, and pilot testing. The entire project is an achievement in its own right. One special achievement to note is specific to art's influence in design. When designing the project, a natural process for the design team includes sketching, writing, and for some, painting. As part of the conceptual study, the dynamic connection of the program, pedagogy, and student/teacher movement led to a crafted painting by one of the designers. In sharing this with the District, it inspired the team to incorporate the painting into the project, which led to the mosaic mural wall seen at the main entryway - a flow of movement, pattern, color, elements all forging a path through the building, much like a group of students filled with joy and excitement for learning.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

The school was designed to minimize the impact to the environment, and a positive byproduct of that design is a reduced financial impact from utilities. All landscaping beyond the play field is low-water and/or native. Irrigation is supplied by reclaimed water. Rooftop solar panels reduce energy usage from the grid. The building was intentionally sited adjacent to the neighboring canyon. Access to the outdoors and siting to allow for natural breezes reduce the need for air conditioning. Building a school that will stand the test of time will reduce the need to expend financial resources in the near-term to update and/or maintain the space.

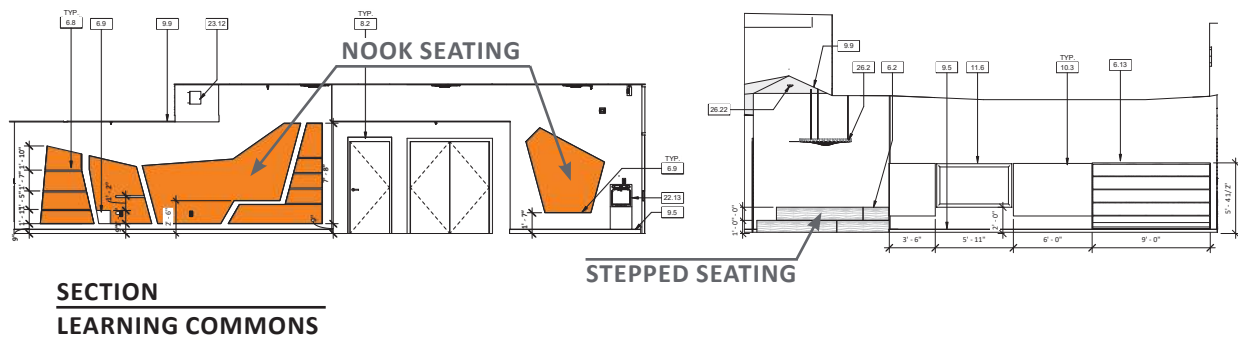
“School facility planning in Del Mar is centered on the concept that the school is a center of the community. Criteria are developed to tailor the size and type of school to the community served, and planning involves all segments of the school and larger community. When planning for school facilities is conducted, it is done so in an open forum, and input from the community is requested, valued, and incorporated.”

-District Educational Specifications



LEARNING COMMONS

The educational environment demonstrates its innovative nature through its unique features, including the flexibility of learning studios, the availability of spacious learning commons, and access to outdoor areas. Each classroom is reduced in size to maximize flexibility and use of breakout spaces, with large glazed openings that open to interior and exterior collaboration spaces, inspired by the students as forces of nature. The learning spaces are designed to be adaptable, offering comfortable furniture that is suitable for different age groups. This allows both students and staff to have options for learning in the studios as well as the commons. Moreover, collaboration is fostered among students across different learning studios and grade levels, promoting teamwork and interaction. This inclusive **Learners First** approach to collaboration enhances the overall educational experience and encourages a sense of community within the learning environment.



KINDERGARTEN

Innovation carries through to the kindergarten area, tucked away from the bustle of the bigger campus with dedicated entry from the parking area and administration space. Three classrooms share open and flexible indoor/outdoor learning commons, intentionally scaled down to create a more comfortable environment for these early learners. Playful windows, flexible furnishings, and connection to the outdoors aim to support a healthy environment for all. The kindergarten's siting takes advantage of the site's natural grade changes, with berms, gentle sloped walks, and play equipment that activates the rolling slope, encouraging climbing, relaxing, or sliding. The design of the kindergarten spaces are scaled down but similar to the upper grade classrooms (and big building) in materiality and function, allowing for a smoother transition to those bigger (classroom) spaces.



“DISTRICT PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The vision of the District is the unrelenting pursuit of the extraordinary school experience. This vision leads to the District’s mission, to ignite genius and empower students to advance the world. The District believes that we must seize opportunities to revolutionize the traditional school system to better prepare today’s students. A wise investment in time and resources will radically change and improve the school experience.

WE BELIEVE:

The school experience is built upon a strong academic foundation within a safe, secure environment.

In the joy of learning.

In student choice and ownership of learning.

In the genius of each child.

In developing integrity, compassion, and empathy.

In developing grit, perseverance, and a passion for learning.

In empowering students to be thinkers and change makers.

In the power of curiosity.

In the power of team.

In taking risks and not settling.

Our students, as engaged citizens, will positively impact their community and the world.

Throughout the previous four years, district staff has done extensive research and analysis of students’ needs, world demands, and existing educational practices and experiences. Using acquired knowledge from this extensive research and analysis, we know it is time to reshape the educational experience for students. The traditional school system is incomplete and falls short in preparing our students to meet the needs of today’s world. This includes the facilities in which our teachers and students interact each day.

The District develops students’ strengths, passions, and sense of purpose, and prepares them to serve a broader social, political, and economic community. Three levers identify the means or agency of achieving this end.

LEVER ONE: STRONG ACADEMIC CORE AND HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION

The academic core is the foundation on which the school experience develops. It grounds the work and ensures students develop essential skills and competencies. High-quality instruction identifies the research-based instructional elements that connect teacher actions with student performance.

LEVER TWO: MASTERY OF SKILLS THAT MATTER MOST

We are in a constant, unrelenting and exciting race to adapt and lead as we lay the groundwork for a promising future for our students. The skills that matter most require the ability to think and learn across disciplines, connect multiple ideas, create new knowledge, and engage in breakthrough thinking.

LEVER THREE: ENVIRONMENT

The physical environment of a school or classroom will influence how individuals interact, their behaviors, and their performance. It is the “third teacher.” The physical space should inspire the work of groups and individuals. It is through this Lever Three that our facilities are envisioned in a manner that supports and enhances Lever One and Lever Two.

-District Educational Specifications





PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT SITE

Place Matters for this 10-acre elementary school site. The stakeholder and design team's vision of the building's aesthetic is tied to the site's location along the Santa Monica Ridge and within the surrounding residential neighborhood. Concrete masonry unit walls, exposed heavy timber structure, and ample glazing were selected not only for their durability and functionality, but also to express the openness of the site and its connection to the canyon and nature.



- 1 OVERSIZED SKYLIGHTS THROUGHOUT CAMPUS TO PROVIDE NATURAL DAYLIGHT FROM ABOVE
- 2 OUTDOOR LEARNING SPACES FOR EVERY CLASSROOM WITH GLASS ROLL UP DOORS AND STORM WATER TREATMENT "RIVER" AS BUFFER BETWEEN PLAY AND LEARNING
- 3 ROOFTOP SOLAR TO OFFSET SITE'S ENERGY CONSUMPTION
- 4 UPPER GRADE KINETIC PLAY ELEMENTS
- 5 LUNCH AREA WITH MULTIPLE AREAS FOR STUDENT CHOICE AND VARIATION OF SUNLIGHT
- 6 AMPHITHEATER WITH VIEW TO BIOSWALE AND CANYON BEYOND
- 7 STORM WATER BIOSWALE INTEGRATED PURPOSEFULLY INTO LANDSCAPE
- 8 KINDER KINETIC PLAY ELEMENTS

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The educational environment is thoughtfully designed to embrace the outdoors and maximize the potential for interactive learning. All buildings are single story for scale and to minimize impact on views to the canyon from neighboring structures and fits within the context of the residential community surrounding the site. Campus entry is through canyon-like carvings between the buildings, inviting and welcoming each student. Kindergarten is safely tucked in the quieter end of the cul-de-sac with dedicated entry from the administration space. Playgrounds are strategically planned away from parking and street views to maximize safety and incorporate slides at grade level changes, adding an element of excitement and exploration for the students. Two amphitheaters allow for outdoor gathering or performance - one that rest naturally on the play field's hillside and one that is carved out as facing west to the canyon.



HOW WE FIT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Pacific Sky School is nestled within the residential community of Pacific Highlands Ranch and has truly become a community connector, allowing families and students to walk to school. When the campus is not in session, the field and walking track are available for community use by way of a canyon trail. With the future Pacific Sky Park just adjacent to the campus, the area as a whole honors the openness of a park and maintains a visual and physical connection to westward views.



MOTIVATING SPACE: The school's design creates an environment that inspires and motivates students and staff

COLLABORATION & CONNECTION: The open and flexible layout fosters collaboration and connections beyond the traditional classroom setting.

MODERN LEARNING APPROACHES: The school's design aligns with innovative teaching methods, promoting active participation and critical thinking.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: The school actively engages with the community, promoting a sense of belonging and civic responsibility.



INSPIRE | MOTIVATE

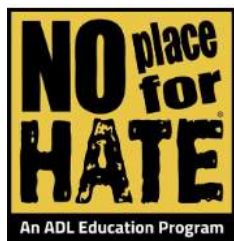
The project's design allows staff and students to engage in learning in a manner that has been discussed, studied, and engaged in long before this school was built. The openness and flexibility motivate staff and students to collaborate and connect beyond their learning studio. The space truly caters to this type of learning. Design issues at existing campuses that had hindered the process in the past have very much been removed. Through community engagement and this project's design process, the design team was both motivated and inspired by the District's passion for changing the way future students learn and were thrilled to team with like-minded creative educators and thinkers. The traditional envelope of a school is pushed and pulled to specifically accommodate this site, the program, the environment, and most importantly, its life force, the students. Elements from this project, in whole or in part will be used in future schools and existing campus modernizations without a doubt.

INCLUSIVITY

This exceptional school prioritizes accessibility for all students, featuring a diverse range of spaces tailored to meet the needs of every learner. The inclusive design process actively involved the entire community, ensuring a welcoming environment for all. However, the true cornerstone lies within the dedicated staff, who continually cultivate a culture of inclusive thinking. They engage in purposeful learning, promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. Ultimately, it is the people within this school who play a pivotal role in *fostering justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion*, surpassing the impact of the physical space. The space, in its beautiful choreography, simply provides the forum.

"Whether you're a student, educator or family member, you have a role to play in combating bias and bullying as a means to stop the escalation of hate. No Place for Hate® is a self-directed program helping all members of your school community do just that. "

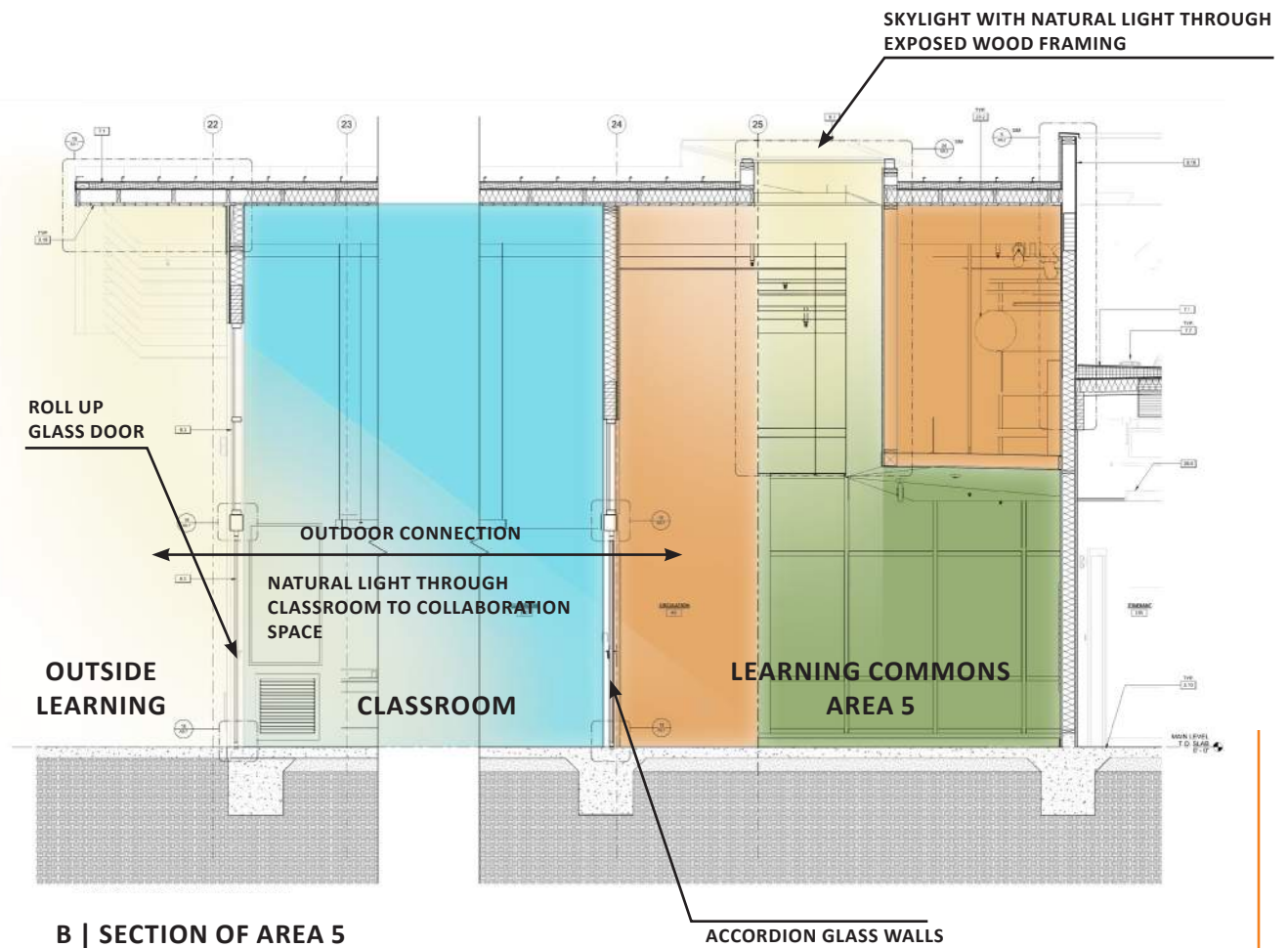
All of the District's nine schools have received the No Place For Hate designation.



THE INNOVATION

Quick, easy, universal access to adjacent learning spaces, combined with the ability to utilize smaller classroom studios, giving more square footage to the collaborative learning commons, along with the ease of access to the outdoors ALL remove obstacles that are present in all other existing schools in this District.



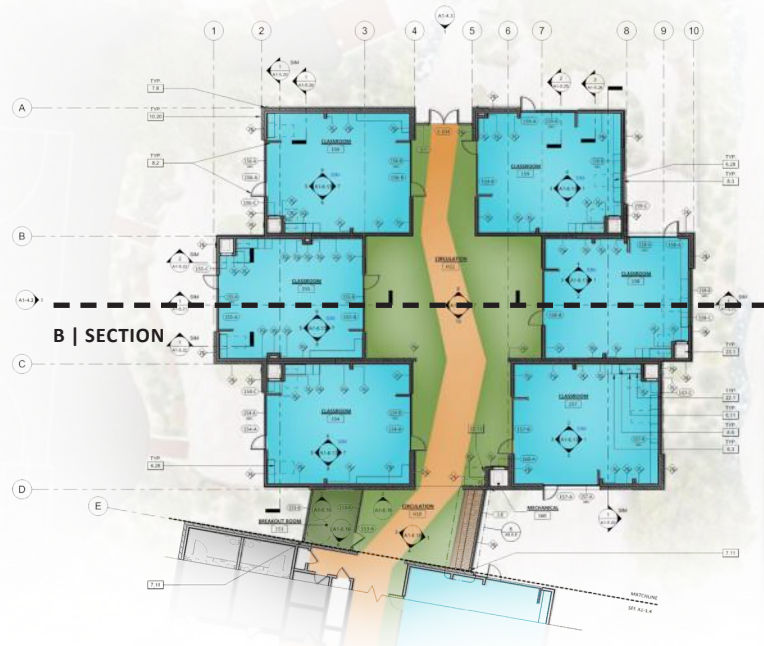


SUSTAINABILITY AND WELLNESS

LEGEND

- ACTIVE CORRIDOR
- COLLABORATION SPACE
- CLASSROOM K-6

Designing for integration, sustainable elements are learning opportunities as well as beautiful architectural and natural interventions on site and throughout the building. Project complies with CALGreen and CHPS “Design” standards and includes clerestory windows, expansive skylights, and glazed accordion walls for natural daylight and cross ventilation. Masonry walls are used as finish and thermal mass, mimicking the striations of the adjacent canyon. Water conservation is celebrated through native planting, reclaimed water-use for irrigation, and stormwater retention.



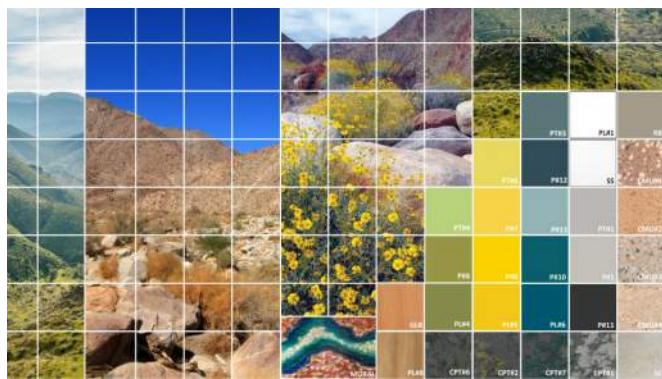


ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Both electrical and mechanical systems were designed to work with the building's focus for outdoor integration. Lighting follows CALGreen with motion sensor control and daylight optimization. The mechanical system is zoned based on "areas" within the building and includes Merv 13 filtration. The high ceilings within the space allows for heat to rise and escape rather than remain stagnant in the space. Solar photo voltaic panels are installed at the rooftops to offset energy use and serve as a teaching tool for students, resulting in an 80% reduction in energy use (from the Zero Tool baseline (CBECS 2003), meeting the 2030 Challenge.

MATERIALS

Building materials were selected for durability, function, and to connect each student to nature. Wood is seen throughout the building not only in structure but in finished built in elements and seating. Wood logs are seen throughout the exterior for both play and seating. Masonry walls are installed with striated pattern to connect to the canyon's edge, rich in earth tones, and serve as thermal mass and finish. Flooring is polished concrete as well as carpet tile/plank with a percentage of recycled material. All finishes meet or exceed the requirements for low VOC levels. Large overhangs support lower heat gain and continue the wood finish to the exterior.



HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

Students enjoy natural ventilation and mechanical conditioning, thanks to large operable openings and multi-zonal controls. A seamless connection is created between indoors and outdoors as classrooms open to the building exterior and a shared learning commons, allowing for cross ventilation and continuation of natural light throughout the campus. Skylights and clerestory windows further enhance the interior space, fostering a vibrant learning environment. Meticulous analysis utilizing modeling software ensured optimal placement of overhangs and glazing, harnessing the power of natural light. Carbon Dioxide monitors are installed to notify occupants if CO2 is above 1,000 fpm.

Students are encouraged to connect with the outdoors throughout large openings and outdoor learning and play areas that are edged with landscape grasses, trees, wood log benches, and large boulders. Landscaping integrates stormwater treatment measures throughout the outdoor play and learning areas ensuring a connection to the natural surroundings.

A4LE CORE VALUES

EMBRACING CORE VALUES: A JOURNEY OF STUDENT-CENTERED INNOVATION

In the pursuit of creating a remarkable learning environment, one elementary school has aligned itself with the core values of the Association for Learning Environments (A4LE). The core values embraced by this extraordinary elementary school align seamlessly with those of A4LE. With a focus on learner-centricity, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, the school has created a space that fosters collaboration, respect, and a deep connection to the physical environment. Join us as we embark on a journey through the transformative experiences at this extraordinary elementary school, where its core values align seamlessly with those of A4LE.

Learners First: Putting Students at the Heart

Just like A4LE, this elementary school places students at the center of its core values. The planning and design process revolved around creating a student-centered environment that prioritizes the needs of every learner. All students were engaged in 2019 to design a classroom, playground, or entire school. The design team along with District staff reviewed design and interacted with students as an integral part of the design process. From flexible, student-sized, comfortable classrooms to spaces that encourage student input and collaboration, the school's commitment to A4LE's learner-first principle ensures an environment where students thrive.

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Amplifying Every Voice

The core value of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion resonates deeply within this elementary school. Mirroring A4LE's commitment, the District intentionally engaged all members of the community, inviting diverse perspectives to shape the learning spaces. By embracing the principles of justice and equity, the school ensures that every voice is heard, creating an inclusive environment where all students feel valued, represented, and safe to unleash their genius.

Innovation: Redefining Learning Spaces

Innovation is a shared value between A4LE and this elementary school. Inspired by A4LE's focus on exploring the intersection of learning and place, the school has redefined traditional learning spaces to promote collaboration, flexibility, and adaptability. At this elementary school, innovation thrives through the reimagining of learning spaces. Smaller classrooms with large openings seamlessly connect to a vibrant learning commons, fostering collaboration and flexibility. Each classroom integrates outdoor learning spaces, providing students with fresh air and adaptable environments. The Innovation Center, replacing the traditional Multi-Use Room (MUR), serves as a dynamic hub that connects to STEAM+ classrooms. It offers engaging and collaborative spaces for various group sizes, with the ability to create separate areas or connect to outdoor learning spaces. This central hub connects grade levels, the lunch area, and administration, fostering a sense of community and facilitating seamless interaction. Through these innovative design choices, the school creates a stimulating environment that encourages curiosity, creativity, and adaptable learning experiences. By embracing innovative design choices such as learning commons, outdoor learning spaces, and smaller classrooms, the school nurtures a culture of creativity and exploration.



Collaboration, Collegiality, Connection: Building Bridges within the Community

The core value of collaboration, collegiality, and connection aligns perfectly with the ethos of this elementary school. Similar to A4LE, the school's planning and design process emphasized the importance of involving all stakeholders, including parents, staff, students, community members, and the design team. This campus is the physical embodiment of the pedagogical shifts and classroom design iterations that the District had been going through as part of District Design 2022 (Strategic Plan).

Respect: Nurturing New Ideas and Diverse Perspectives

Respect for new ideas and diverse perspectives is a cornerstone of both A4LE and this elementary school. Teachers actively participated in the design process, shaping the learning spaces to support student agency and leadership. By valuing and incorporating diverse perspectives, the school fosters an environment where students are leaders of their own learning.

Place Matters: Where Teaching and Learning Flourish

The shared core value of recognizing the significance of the physical environment unites A4LE and this elementary school. Inspired by A4LE's emphasis on the connection between teaching, learning, and the physical environment, the school integrates the surrounding landscape and outdoor spaces into its design choices. These spaces include thoughtfully designed playgrounds that encourage active play and social interaction, slides that connect different areas and grade changes, and a sloping field that creates a natural amphitheater leading to the lunch area. Play areas are edged with native landscaping and include biophilic play elements that connect each student to nature. By incorporating these outdoor elements, the school fosters a deep connection between students and their physical surroundings, providing opportunities for exploration, collaboration, and enriching learning experiences that extend beyond the traditional classroom. By leveraging the power of place, the school creates an enriching environment where teaching and learning flourish.



GOODNIGHT PAC SKY!