LL Forum#4 – Elementary Schools Transformation and Programming Questions
02.12.2019

Meeting Agenda and Notes:

Discussion Questions based on School Transformation Map:

Size/Capacity: 5's and 4 – what would be the intentional building size/capacity? Describe what you envision with autonomous small schools/teacher teams.

- Grades that are split don't have a collaboration space or storage
- More flexibility to keep grades grouped together (work best within grade levels)
- The French DLI - do not like this because it is the have's vs have nots
- An office area for each grade level would be nice for teachers to meet, store things,
- Operable walls within grade groupings would be awesome
- Would be great to be able to combine classes into a bigger group so teachers can teach lessons to multiple classes
- Retractable white board walls would be great!

Collaboration: How could your schools better support regular/synchronous teacher collaboration?

- A room for collaboration, places to leave notes to each other/copies, place for information to be left
- Having bathrooms closer to your area (for both teachers and kids) is also nice so that you don't waste as much time going to the bathroom during your down time

Visible Learning: How transparent should spaces be? (See AIA Safety Article). What is your perception of the difference between 4 and 5 in the rubric?

- This would be beneficial if you have a group space outside of the room so teacher can see students out there (opinions were voiced on the spectrum from full floor to ceiling windows to windows with a (3'-0" or so sill) and wall with white board below.)
- May be nice to have blinds that drop down for testing
- Kara (from Spec Ed) again mentioned the possibility of using movable white board walls (not necessarily transparent) between classrooms – a more open plan concept for sharing classroom space.

Flexibility: What makes or would make the spaces in your school more flexible for multiple uses?

- Furniture is a huge part of flexibility
- Various kinds of seating/tables for different students, some modern study carols for privacy when needed

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- Technology component - would be nice to be able to link systems (audio/video/screens) between classrooms if/when you open classrooms to each other to accommodate bigger groups or team.
- Restrooms that are gender inclusive near the classrooms would save so much time for learning (single occupant restrooms in or near the classrooms were discussed quite a bit, naughty things happen in the group restrooms especially the boy's restrooms – eliminating the source would save time and hassle for everyone)

Social Setting: Your schools (excepting Trailside) lack a central gathering space and according to the map you'd like one. Is this a space at the school entry, like a generous lobby with space to visit, display student work, use for all-school events? One of you reported that you'd like "hang out spaces" also – describe these – how many, where, how large, what happens in them.

- Would like a more centralized gathering space
- This is very important - would be cool if the space was more flexible than a gym
- Flexible seats/benches
- Doesn't necessarily have to be the lobby - could be the media center
- More informal spaces - they like Treasure Mountain's space (sounded like they meant the entry)
- May still need to be separate from hallways and could be next to library with flexible wall to open it up
- One teacher ranks storage as a higher priority than gathering space
- The more flexible, the more valuable the space will be

Expression: School signature expressed in occasional places or even widely throughout building. Tell us what you envision as a visible school signature.

Interdisciplinary/Grouping: Can you describe ways the elementary school building plan can better facilitate interdisciplinary learning? (Specials adjacent to core classrooms?, Other?)

- Lab space would be good for this
- There is no place to store a project currently - could put this in a closed room that is dedicated to projects
- Would probably need at least 2 of these labs at a minimum
  - One per grade level would be even better

Autonomy/Community/Mixed Use: One of the Guiding Principles is Relationships. You reported that you're mostly self-contained with limited shared use of the school facilities, shared use of site in some cases, not relying on neighboring institutions for space or programs. Help us understand your ideal for sharing the school facility with the community.and for going out into the community. See map #11, 12, 13

- New security makes community sharing a nightmare
- Would be nice to let community use spaces in school after hours (some spaces remain locked)
- School-community relationship might depend on what that particular community needs
  - McPolin (Title One school) might benefit more from this

An interesting discovery was made as we discussed the space summary and what we wrote in as Community Room, meaning to us a large group gathering space. The teacher group read it as a much-needed place for the Outreach Coordinator, who interfaces with students and families to provide food and other resources. Space needs are:

- Quite a bit of storage space
- Place to meet with students and families, private and comfortable
- Pop up pantries (store food and clothes)
- Some schools have full time, some have part time Outreach Coordinator

Leadership: You reported differing current levels of centralized vs distributed admin and guidance. And also differing ideals for the future. (Parleys 1, Jeremy 2, Trailside 4, McPolin 5). What are the pros and cons of centralizing both admin and guidance, centralizing admin but decentralizing guidance and decentralizing both?

- Really beneficial to have some separation between main office and counseling areas (kids associate admin office with trouble)
- Some administrators are not ready to give up their office *(background on this – in an administrator meeting, it was suggested to all the principals that they give up their offices and be "out" in the school amongst the teachers and students. Could also use the admin conference room as their office)*
  - Nice to have a space where teachers can come into office and talk with closed door, etc.
- Would be interesting to have counselors spread out through the school
  - Would make them more accessible to teachers/students
- Life skills teaching – counselor either moves class to class or everyone goes to one location
  - These are once a month where kids learn about getting along with peers, not doing drugs, etc.
- *See end of notes for more detail on administrative suite*

Parent Volunteers: Three schools reported that parent volunteers access only admin and the library. Jeremy Ranch reports having a volunteer room. You all say you'd like a Parent Room and Volunteer Room.

- Would this be one room or rooms
- Describe how it works, what it needs, general size.

- The Volunteer Room at Jeremy Ranch is a place volunteers use for tutoring or coaching small groups of kids (lower priority than other spaces)
- This could be a shared use with another type of flexible space
- Would be nice to have min 5-6 small group rooms throughout the school for "itinerant" work done by either staff or volunteers
- These should be truly flexible (not used by one thing all day long)
- There might be different needs for these
- A place for parents to store coats and bags is also useful and could occur in a locker alcove or another room within the admin suite.

Small Groups: Jeremy and McPolin report that they have a variety of small learning spaces that are closely related to the core spaces.

- Are these the break-out rooms between classrooms? Do you prefer this to small spaces outside the classroom?
- What is more valuable to you, large group or small group spaces?

Arts: What do you envision for art space(s) and how would you like it to integrate to core spaces and media center?

- Need a dedicated space for art
- Needs specific finishes and probably specific teacher as well
- Art isn't part of the state curriculum in Utah
- Schools may or may not have art programs (some are led by parents, such as at Jeremy Ranch, some have a specialist)
- Art teachers are funded, in part, by the EVA program
- McPolin has a dedicated art room
- Trailside art is taught in a kiva (open collab space)
- Parleys has a dedicated art room
- Jeremy ranch - art is taught in a classroom that is dedicated to art

Music *(majority of music input given by Parley's Park music teacher Aaron Webb)*

- All of the elementary schools have a full-time music teacher and a dedicated music classroom
- Should be designed to contain sound, have daylight (skylight), and good acoustics
- Practice rooms would be beneficial for small group projects (essential for middle and high school)
- Need more storage space for a variety of instruments
- Need space for a lot of movement – music learning includes movement and dance and the kids are up on their feet and moving a lot of the time. Best to have a separate dance room. Parley's Park has one and it is nice!

Special Education: One of you recorded your future model as pull-out and two of you noted it as inclusion with minimal exclusive Special Ed spaces. Describe what you would need in both models and what fulfills the guiding principles.

- Resource spaces shouldn't be in the K/Pre-K area – this creates "othering" and makes older kids feel stigmatized (more of a shared space)
- Always going to need self-contained spec ed classrooms for some students. This applies to all the elementary schools.
- Would also be nice to also have the ability to integrate spec ed students in small groups into other classrooms and spaces.
- Self-contained classrooms should be centralized, near to entry and admin, and more transparent. Should have two per school.

- Need a restroom in or adjacent to the self-contained classroom. Two classrooms could share one restroom. Would be nice for restroom to include a shower. Should also have changing equipment (changing table for school-age children).
- Self-contained classroom should be near a physical therapy area - this could be a room shared with activities like speech pathology. Physical therapy room should be located near the PE/multipurpose room. Therapy room needs close access a single-occupant restroom.
- A motor and sensory room would be good to have - could this be combined with OT? It would be a calming space that serves different students/purposes.
- Need a time-out room (seclusionary space) that could be shared:
  - Windows with safety glass
  - Ecker hill has a good example of windows
- Laundry facility - could be shared with the health area

P.E./Athletics: In what ways does your existing MP Room fall short of serving your P.E./Athletics needs?

- Does your existing MP Room meet the GP objectives of providing positive, healthy, inclusive space? Space that allows for movement?
- How about your outdoor playground and fields?
- Does your existing MP Room meet the GP objective of welcoming community participation and support?

  - When you have the multipurpose space divided, there is not enough space for activities
  - Need space to store all of the cafeteria furniture (tables and chairs). They have storage rooms now but they are filled with the chairs alone so there is no place to store tables so the floor area is open.
  - Can't fit all kids and parents at once
  - *(the group didn't have a whole lot to say about this topic or the MP Room. It seems to meet their needs adequately and is not a high priority for future improvement)*

Outdoor Learning:
- Common area with benches for outdoor learning (either covered or not), a garden / greenhouse where kids can do science - can be used 365 days a year
- Would be great to have an art space outside as well with storage close by for easels and other supplies (a storage room accessible from outside would help)
- Area with "loose parts" where kids can play with/build things
- Places to read outside, sit and chill
- Functional sculpture (public artist?)
- Jeremy ranch allows eating outside
  - This could be a pain for allergies

Assembly: How are your MP Room and stage serving your assembly and performance needs? Should the stage be sized for teaching and learning?

- Stage does not currently work as a classroom (too much noise on both sides)

- Can barely fit all of the kids in there (no room for parents)
- Lighting is also terrible for stage
- Not comfortable for kids to sit on floor for longer assemblies (not frequent but would be nice to improve)
- Need nice sound system with microphones - more cost effective in the long term to buy a good system

Tech Ed: All of you marked your future state as a 5 "Tech Ed spaces integrated with core curriculum and spaces". How does this influence the building design?

Science/STEM/STEAM: How would you like your future schools to be planned for science/STEM/STEAM education?

- How many of these spaces?
- Located near main entry as wow space or located adjacent to core learning spaces?
- Should it flow to the outside?

  - Outfitted with sinks, cabinets on perimeter, very flexible on the interior with movable furniture
  - Would be cool to have this be all glass so parents and other kids could see what's going on
  - Could make this a wow! space
  - Would like at least two of these, though one in each learning community would be great

Classroom Sizes: How do you see class sizes varying to match size of student groups or even more to support teachers collaborating with varied groups?

- Does this mean you want to move to a learning suite concept that moves away from uniform classroom size and teachers associated with one specific group of students?
- How much connection between classrooms?

  - This idea is cool but with the dual language, this would get difficult
  - However, if elementaries were magnets - a French school, a Spanish school, a stem school, etc. this could work better
  - Some teachers are more innovative than others (this isn't necessarily an age thing)

Computer Labs: A few of you said computer labs are no longer needed. If not, where are your coding classes held? Should dry labs still be programmed for computer or technology-focused learning?

  - Schools are 1-to-1 computers for 2nd grade and up
  - Nice to have labs for K-1
  - Also used for testing
  - 1 computer lab is plenty
  - Coding is separate in some schools; some schools have coding teacher come into classrooms
    - Could maybe combine this?

Media Center: We talked about media centers at the last forum, in January. There seemed to be consensus that media centers be rethought as collaborative places that feature maker space or maker stations, in addition to books and other media. There was some discussion of distributing them in several locations. Which direction are we headed for the elementary schools?

- If central, can you envision an open media center working?
    - Would be nice to have this centralized, more open
    - Parley's Park media center used to be open but was eventually enclosed
        - Noise became an issue
        - Need something more transparent that would still block sound
    - Little rooms around the library (like in PCCAPS) would be nice so you can have big and small groups working at the same time

Teacher Planning Centers: We talked last time about spaces for teachers, professional development, socializing and team building. You all marked 5 "Teacher Planning Centers with conf and food". Does this mean:

- Multiple small centers, in learning communities, rather than one large teacher lounge?
- Multiple small centers in addition to one large teacher lounge?
- One large lounge plus one smaller lounge/planning center with kitchenette remote from the large lounge?
- All of the above?

    - Option 2 above – a large and pleasant teacher lounge and kitchen + a teacher teaming/conf room in each learning community + a shared teacher storage room in each learning community + a single-occupant restroom for teachers in each learning community (see restroom discussion below)

Food Choices: All of you chose 5 "Menu includes fresh, locally grown food, multiple menu options. Grown and prepared by staff and learners, breakfast and after school meals offered."

- Do you do any of this now?
- Gardens on site?
- What implications does this have on the kitchen space, the dining space, access to outdoors?

    - Headed towards food grown and prepared by teachers ("this would be a lot of work" – *doesn't sound like there is any real plan forward*)
    - Would require greenhouse
    - What do we do with the waste? - need to compost, etc.
    - Food is currently prepared fresh at the schools – this is a recent change
        - This is a lot of work for the 1 full time and 2 part time staff
        - Need more people to help with this
    - Wherever the kids eat, there should be a close access to the playground
    - Breakfast and lunch brought to class on cart for young children (Pre-k). The Pre-K teachers said this is far preferable for various reasons.
    - Hard to imagine kids eating places other than the cafeteria
    - How things are now is working ok (*might be a lower priority*)

Cabinetry: Should all learning space cabinetry be moveable?

- o Yes, moveable cabinetry would be nice
- o If there is a shared teacher storage room, then less storage cabinets would be needed in classrooms leaving more space for learning activity

Computer Ratio: Does 1 to 1 have influence the space design?

Restrooms:

- o Gender neutral restrooms for students could work with floor to ceiling partitions
- o If you had one single occupant restroom in every classroom that would solve the issue - kids could go anytime
- o Could have one restroom per 2 classrooms - this would take down many behavior issues because there aren't multiple kids in classrooms and teachers can see kids
- o Valerie asked whether fully enclosed (single-occupant) restrooms would present concern about students locking or barricading themselves inside. Response was that teachers would need master key
- o Have occupancy indicators on doors

Coat Room/Cubbies:

- o The Trailside group doesn't like the coat rooms/exit vestibules that are within the classrooms because they are a pinch point when coming and going.
- o Where to put cubbies then? Outside the classroom but visible?

Pre-K Needs/Grade Alignment:

- o Two Pre-K teachers in the group expressed a strong preference for Pre-K classes at the elementary schools rather than in an early childhood center. The rest of the teacher group agreed. Strong consensus amongst this group. Reasons as follows:
  - Nice for parents to have their kids in the same school
  - Younger kids feel more like capable individuals
  - Older kids can mentor younger kids
  - Good for them to see how school works
  - Still need their own playground/facilities, but should be part of the larger school
  - Location of Pre-K/K - should be next to each other

Student Display:

- o Need more tackable surfaces (not able to display on masonry walls as they exist)
- o Otherwise, the group feels display of student work is happening pretty well already

Administrative Space Needs:

- o Secure vestibule at main entry to direct visitors into office
- o Elementary schools have 1 full time secretary, 1 part time clerk
- o Principal's office - nice to have a table in the office
- o Conference room - should this double as the principal's office?

- Need assistant principal's office
- Head secretary should have private office
- Space for resource officer (part time/floating) - could use an existing space to meet with students
- Have 1.5 counselors per school. Need separate offices (standard size) – plan for two.
- Counselors also need space to meet with groups of students. Plan for two conference rooms to fit 10 students each
  - Counseling area should have a calming room (eyes-on but still private)
- Nurses are full-time at some schools depending on student medical needs. Part-time at others. Need health room with space for two cots, privacy curtains around each, restroom with shower
  - Laundry could be associated with this space if it was big enough
- Don't need teacher workroom in this area if there are distributed teacher workrooms in learning communities. Do need some workroom space for office staff.
- Storage
- Faculty lounge
- Faculty restrooms

See attached Elementary School Space Summary Draft with modifications made during meeting.

End of meeting notes.