North Olmsted

Discovery Report

Fielding
International

Designing schools where learners **thrive**

Workshop Themes and Insights Summary

Current Conditions	Opportunities for Implementation
+ Positive relationships between staff and students	+ Beginning work on developing a shared mindset for student-centered practices, and the implications of that mindset for the routine of school is critical
+ Methods teachers use: direct instruction, small group instruction, centers with student choice	+ Build on existing social and emotional learning practices by systematizing practices and sharing successes within the district
+ Teachers have a desire to grow as professionals but don't feel they have the time or resources to do it	
+ All stakeholders are interested in focusing on relationships between the school and parents and community	+ Develop spaces and curriculum/scheduling structure to support students working in small groups, independently, and student choice
+ Technology is used but it feels limited to staff	+ Support flexible scheduling and physical spaces to allow teacher collaboration and professional development
+ Stakeholders have a desire for growth both in education and facility design but all feel there are financial constraints, time constraints, and mindset constraints	+ More resources and spaces for hands-on learning particularly in STEAM and social studies
	+ Develop opportunities to include parents and community

Observations Summary

Current Conditions	Opportunities for Implementation
+ Staff who cares and has good rapport with students and wants to build relationships + PK-3: Direct Instruction, centers, small group instruction, independent work, group gathering spaces, some comfortable seating, student work on walls-some with a purpose and some not + 4-5: Seems set up for mostly large group direct instruction, saw more individual tablet use, some opportunities for small group instruction + Some classrooms and spaces crowded with instructional materials and desks and chairs + Schools with long hallways and individual classrooms with aides and support staff often tucked away	+ Support creation of student-centered intentional room design that promotes meaningful learning experiences + Flexible seating to support student learning independently, in small groups, and in larger groups + Support intentionality of what is on walls, on shelves, and accessible to students so that all of it promotes learning + Support thoughtful curation of teaching resources and spaces for storage of resources not in use

"Templated" Activities Limit Autonomy

YES!

and Choice
not just in
art

More
equitable
spaces

Current School Landscape

Technology use often
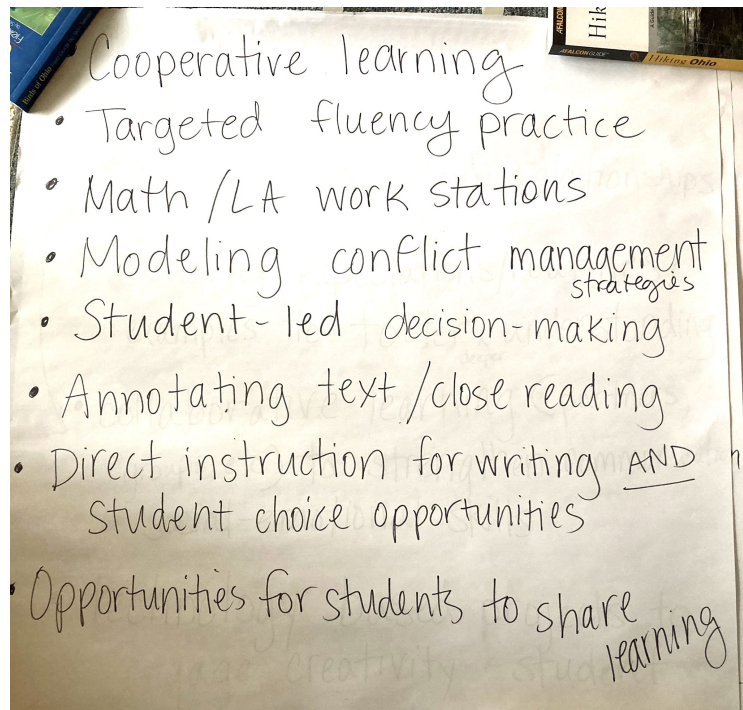
Proud of
how teachers
are creative
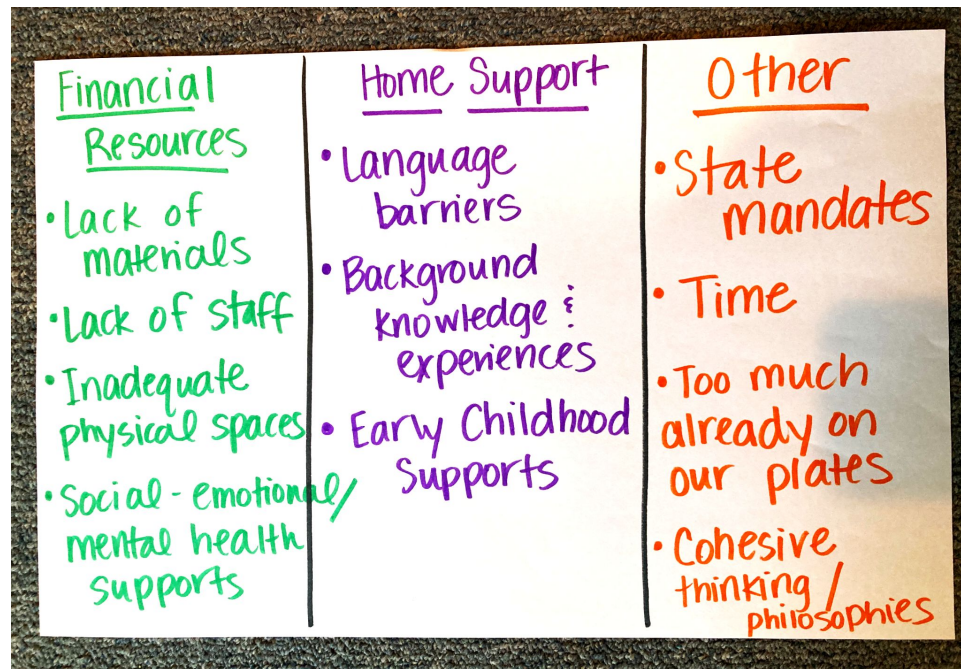limited space

agree

The Current Landscape

What is going well?

+ Small group learning

+ Direct instruction (especially small group)

+ Teacher modeling

+ Collaborative learning

+ Providing student choice

+ Hands-on activities

+ Student-directed activities

+ Timely feedback

+ Supporting multiple learning strategies

+ Station rotations

+ Cultivating empathy

+ Building strong, positive relationships all around

+ Data-driven teaching

Cooperative learning
- Targeted fluency practice
- Math/LA work stations
- Modeling conflict management strategies
- Student-led decision-making
- Annotating text/close reading
- Direct instruction for writing AND student choice opportunities
- Opportunities for students to share learning

The Current Landscape

Existing Barriers
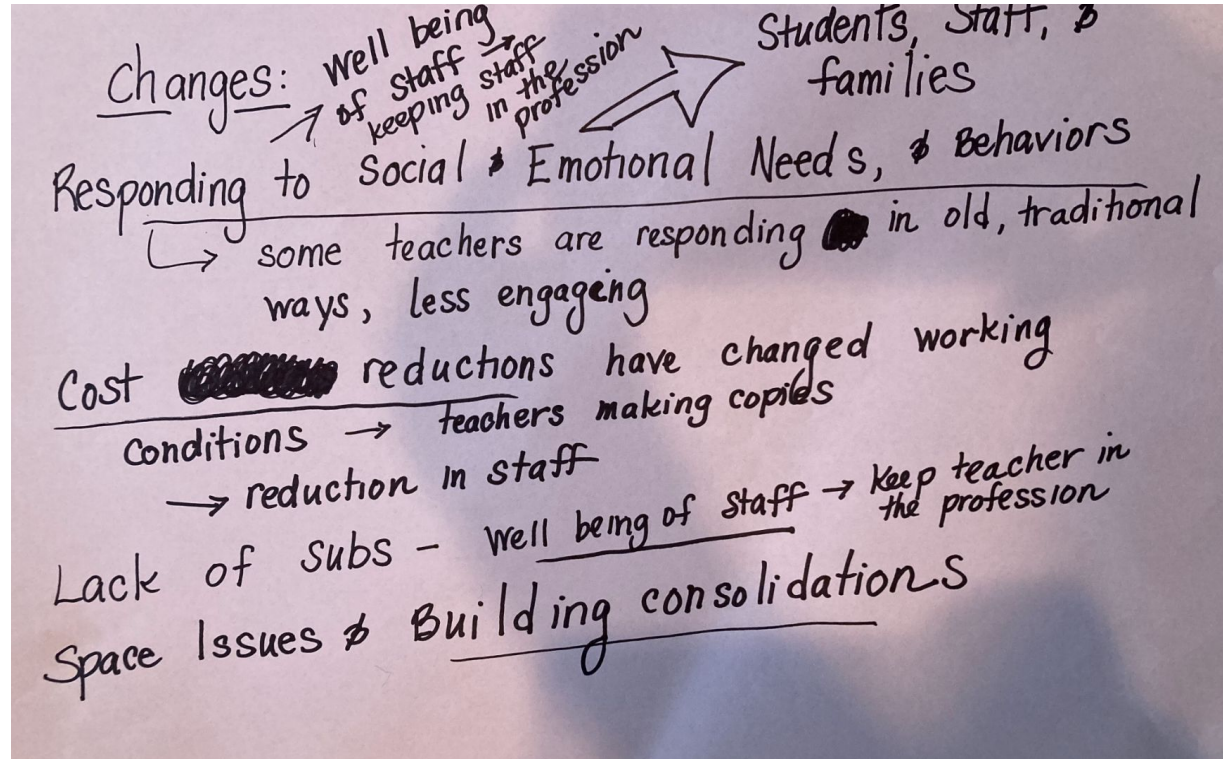
+ Students have significant barriers and challenges in home environments

+ Staff (availability and specific expertise)

+ Facilities are old and uninspiring

+ Lack of enriching materials

+ Traditional siloed instructional model

+ Fixed mindset resisting change

+ Mental health needs

+ Enough time

Handwritten chart with three columns:

Financial Resources
- Lack of materials
- Lack of staff
- Inadequate physical spaces
- Social-emotional/mental health supports

Home Support
- Language barriers
- Background knowledge & experiences
- Early Childhood Supports

Other
- State mandates
- Time
- Too much already on our plates
- Cohesive thinking/philosophies

Changes and Pressures

What's changed and shifted with how school works?

+ Increased social & emotional needs
+ Reduction in staff and resources
+ Changes in finances
+ Meaningful use and integration of technology
+ Pressure to make up for what was lost during COVID

Imagining the Future

What do we Value Most?

Curious kids

Excitement for learning

Accepting all students

Positive relationships

Support for students; SEL+

Growth mindset

Literacy based experiences

What's needed in the Next 10 years?

Needs in the next 10 Years

+ Technology infrastructure for the future

+ More resources: people and materials

+ Safety

+ Pre-K for all

+ Literacy skills

+ Staff collaboration

+ Connection to wider community

+ Social and emotional skills

+ STEM resources

+ Individualized instruction

+ Diversity in instruction

+ Outdoor classroom

+ Support for community and parents

Commitments for the Future

What Might NOCS need to Commit to?

+ School-wide routines

+ Additional specialized staff

+ Professional Development:

- Time for it and focused trainings

+ More instructional resources

+ Growth mindset

+ Priority on students

+ Building relationships with families and students

+ Transparent communication

+ Technology

+ Hands-on learning

+ Making time for collaboration

+ Flexible scheduling to allow time for collaboration

+ Meet the Social and Emotional needs of Student

+ Staff and community outreach

+ Financial support to reach desired educational goals

Keep, Evolve, Discard
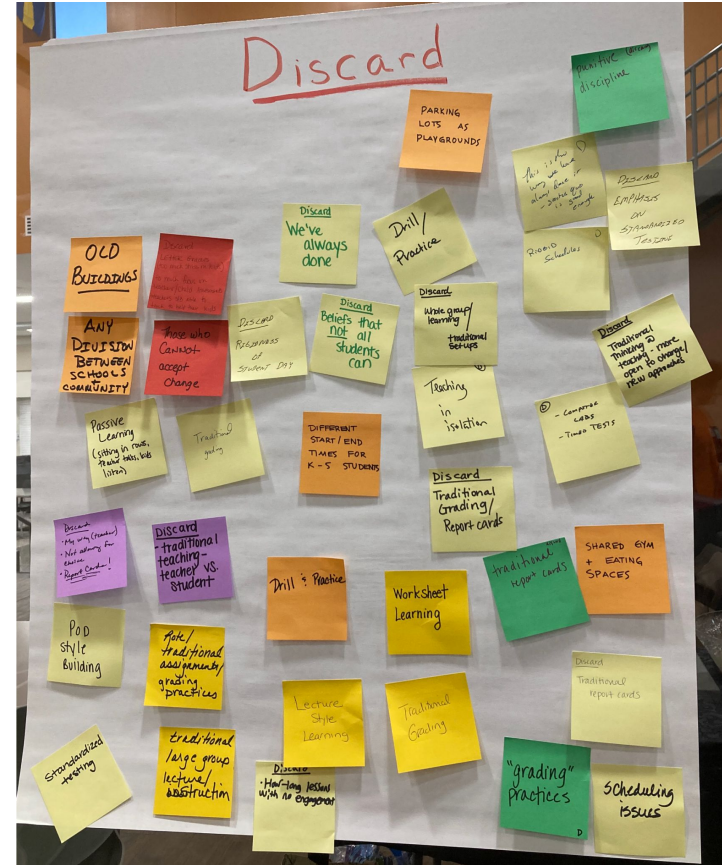
Keep

What are the best parts of school we must keep?

+ Small group learning experiences

+ Focus on relationships

+ High expectations

+ Technology

+ Collaborative experiences

+ Hands-on learning

+ Focus on social and emotional development

Evolve

What parts of school need to Evolve?

+ Intentional learning experiences

+ Teacher collaboration

+ Sense of pride

+ Grading and testing

+ Effective use of technology

+ Disciplinary practices

+ Outdoor spaces

Discard

What may need to be discarded to realize our vision and goals?

+ Traditional teaching, thinking, and beliefs about learning

+ Traditional testing and grading practices

+ Passive learning

+ Teaching in isolation

+ Division between school and community

+ Shared gym and eating spaces

+ Different start/end times for K-5 students

Keep, Evolve, Discard Summary

KEEP	EVOLVE	DISCARD
+ Small group learning experiences	+ Intentional learning experiences	+ Traditional teaching, thinking, and beliefs about learning
+ Focus on relationships	+ Teacher collaboration	+ Traditional testing and grading practices
+ High expectations	+ Sense of pride	+ Passive learning
+ Technology	+ Grading and testing	+ Teaching in isolation
+ Collaborative experiences	+ Effective use of technology	+ Division between school and community
+ Hands-on learning	+ Disciplinary practices	+ Shared gym and eating spaces
+ Focus on social and emotional development	+ Outdoor spaces	+ Different start/end times for K-5 students

What We Heard from Educators

What's important for a new School?

Instructional Team Hopes for the Future	Teachers Desired Experiences for Students
+ Teachers feel they have agency to dream big	+ Authentic Experiences
+ Inspiring passion for learning and teaching	+ Hands-on activities
+ Creating a learning space that has a sense of magic or joy	+ Connections to meaningful and relevant material
+ Creating a place that the community and students are proud of	+ Cultural immersion and appreciation
+ Collaboration and collective effort	+ Student choice, voice and agency
+ The facility provides new opportunities and resources	+ Experiences connected to nature and "green living"
+ It is durable and resilient to change	+ Immersive opportunities

What We Heard
from Students

Themes from Student Engagements

Direct Instruction

Outdoor Learning

Work in small groups
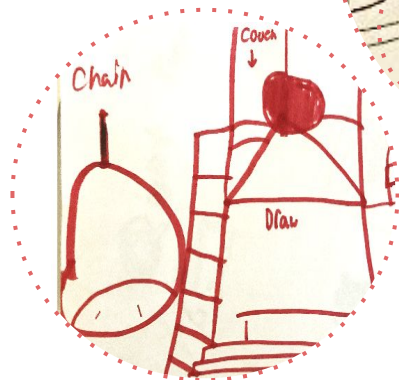

Individual Learning Spaces

Themes from Student Engagements

Soft + squishy, like pillows and soft carpet

Relaxing, comfortable environments

Colorful

Books
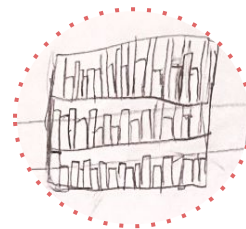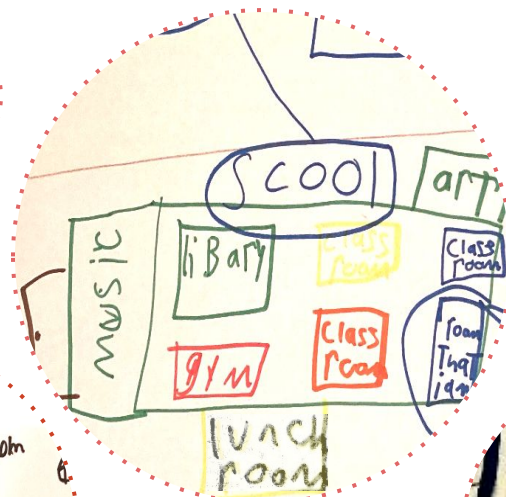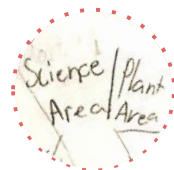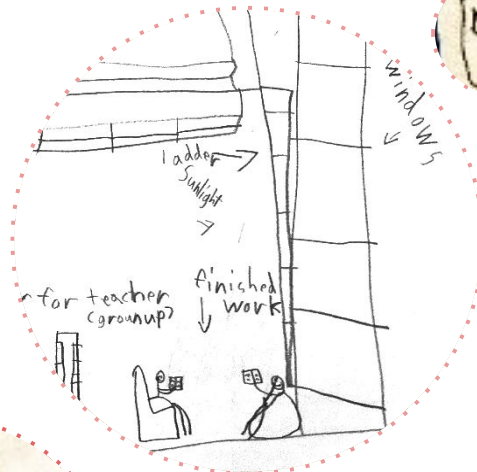

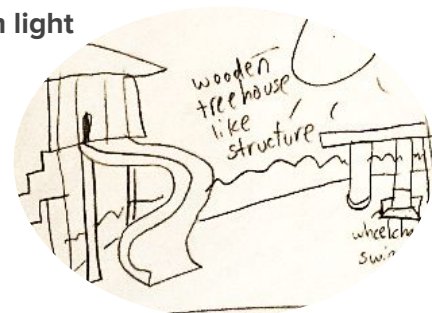Quiet spots for calming and taking a break

Themes from Student Engagements

Science / Plant Area Area

scool art
music liBary class room class room
gym class room room That is
lunch room

Separate rooms for
Eating, gym, science, art

seperate lunch room
seperate gym room
science room
seperate lunch room tn

Plant Scool

windows
ladder
Sunlight
for teacher (grownup?)
finished work

**Plants and Natural
Lighting + Dim light**

Dim light

Outside play

wooden treehouse like structure
wheelch swin

Implementation Alignment
Recommendations

Preliminary Insights: From Emerging Themes to Actions

Collaboration

+ Develop a shared definition
+ Establish a schedule that allows for collaboration (based on definition)
+ Create and support structured professional learning communities with individualized and unified goals and outcomes
+ Establish a structure to share learning
+ Establish specific ways to support family and community collaborations.

Flexibility

+ Develop community norms and rituals/routines to support mindset
+ Support educators' utilization of multiple contexts for learning (classrooms, outdoor environments, shared spaces, etc.)

Professional Agency

+ Quality, unified curricular materials to anchor opportunities for professional choice and judgement (review existing)
+ "More Resources" (But needs definition for areas of greatest impact)

Social Emotional Learning / Needs + Relationships

+ Implementation of ES "Advisory" model (morning meetings, afternoon debrief)
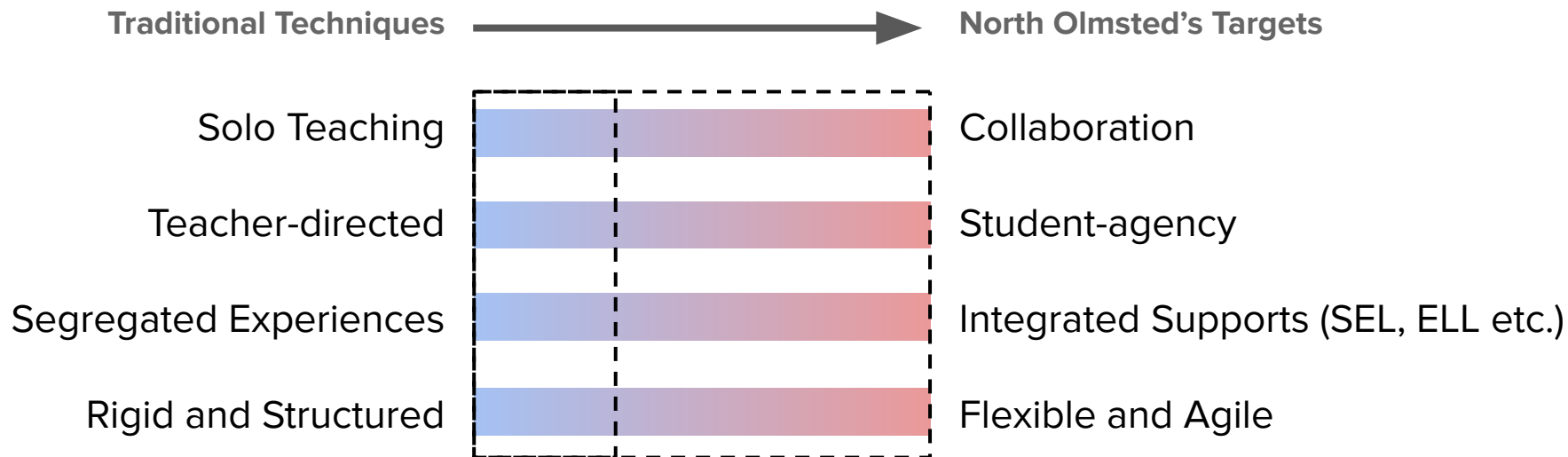+ Trauma Informed/Restorative practices training for all educators

Instructional Practices

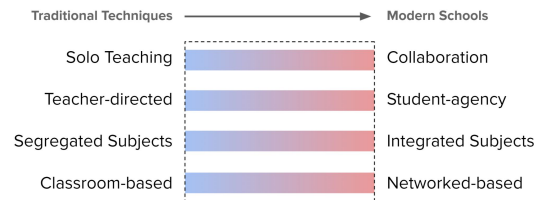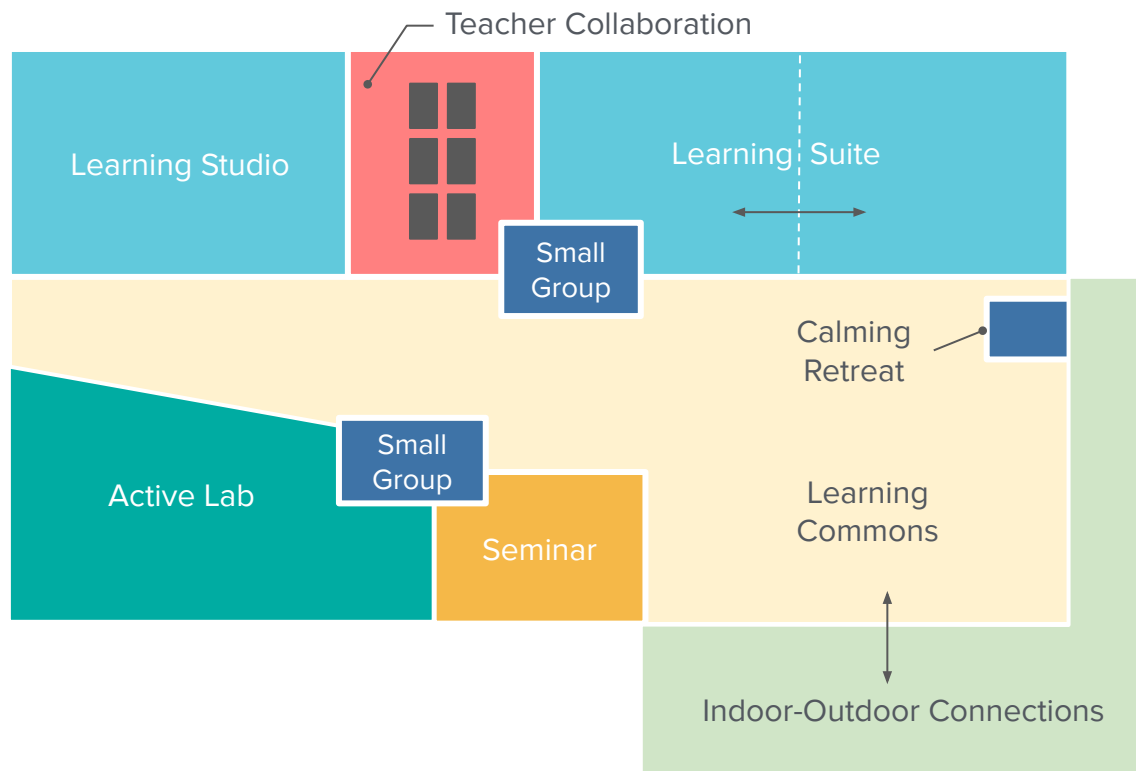+ Training and support for many student-centered strategies (project-based, student-led, inquiry, etc.)

Spectrum of Techniques

Expand What's Possible

Traditional Techniques ⟶ North Olmsted's Targets

Traditional		Target
Solo Teaching		Collaboration
Teacher-directed		Student-agency
Segregated Experiences		Integrated Supports (SEL, ELL etc.)
Rigid and Structured		Flexible and Agile

Spectrum of Spaces

Teacher Collaboration

Learning Studio

Learning Suite

Small Group

Calming Retreat

Active Lab

Small Group

Seminar

Learning Commons

Indoor-Outdoor Connections

Traditional Techniques → Modern Schools

Solo Teaching	Collaboration
Teacher-directed	Student-agency
Segregated Subjects	Integrated Subjects
Classroom-based	Networked-based

By providing a variety of space we expand the potential of how a space can be used.

What if a team of educators supporting a group of learners always included an SEL specialist?

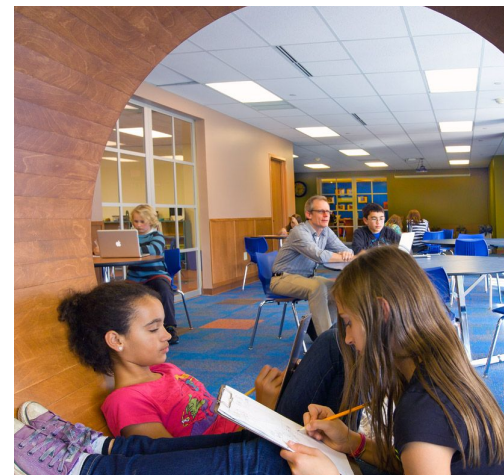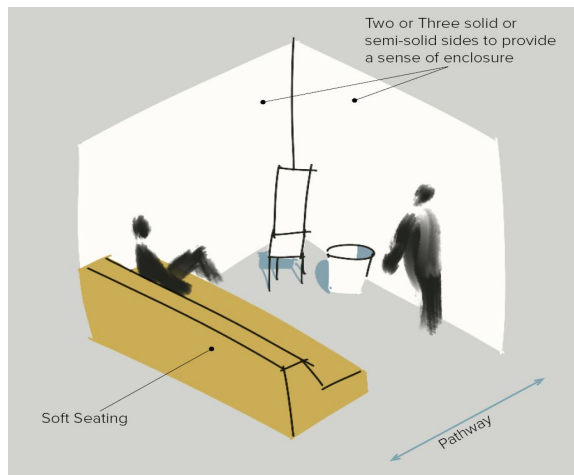What if Special Education was embedded in the community?

What if every group of classrooms had a shared library?

What is a Design Pattern?

Design Patterns are simple sketches and annotations that get down to the essence of how a space works. These key ideas break down the complexity of school design as part of a system. Through the use of Patterns we can design and connect successful educational environments and experiences.

Example Pattern: Cave Space

Two or Three solid or semi-solid sides to provide a sense of enclosure

Soft Seating

Pathway

Problem
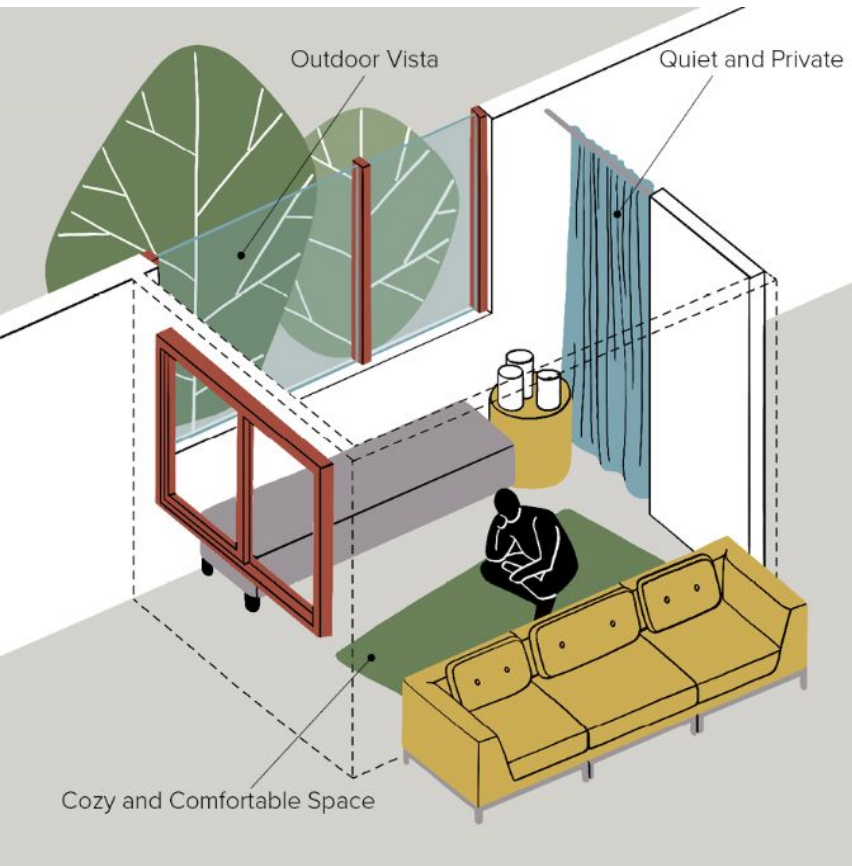Schools are usually boxes that don't provide opportunities for quiet reflection.

Solution
Create small, partially enclosed, cozy nooks with lower ceilings and soft light for individuals and small groups to gather and reflect.

SEL + Relationships + Wellness Patterns

Outdoor Vista

Quiet and Private

Cozy and Comfortable Space

Calming Retreat

Problem
Students need places to rest their mind and enjoy a brain break.

Solution
Create spaces for self regulation. Vary the sizes and shapes of spaces students can use when they need to decompress or rest.

Refrigerator, sink, microwave, self-service

Project Tables

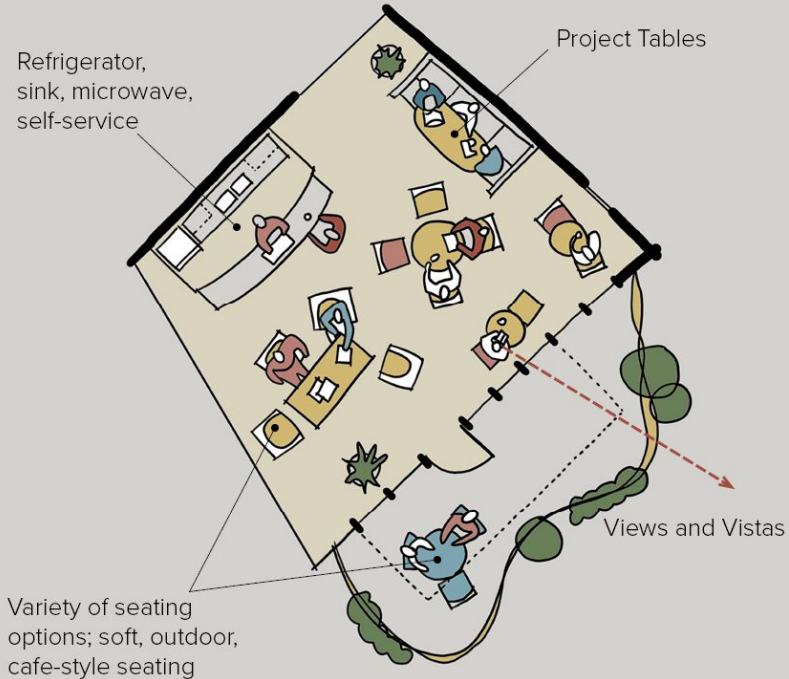Variety of seating options; soft, outdoor, cafe-style seating
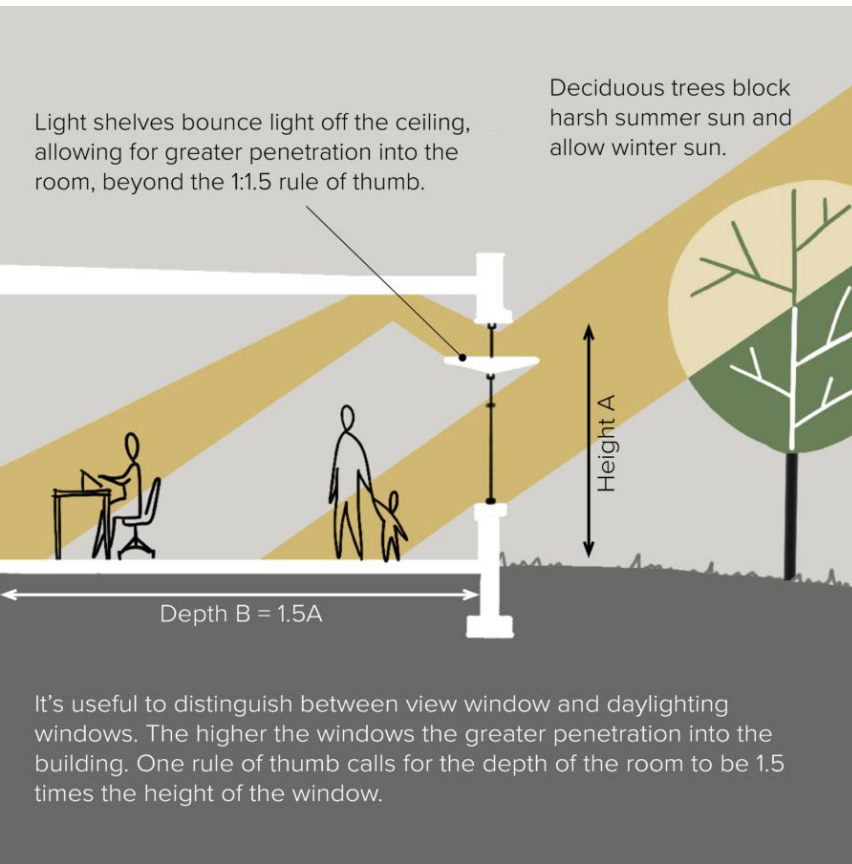
Views and Vistas

Smaller Eating Areas

Problem
School cafeterias are often loud, disruptive, and challenging places for many students to feel comfortable.

Solution
Smaller scale eating areas with round tables help students build relationships and enjoy a lower-stress dining experience.

Light shelves bounce light off the ceiling, allowing for greater penetration into the room, beyond the 1:1.5 rule of thumb.

Deciduous trees block harsh summer sun and allow winter sun.

Height A

Depth B = 1.5A

It's useful to distinguish between view window and daylighting windows. The higher the windows the greater penetration into the building. One rule of thumb calls for the depth of the room to be 1.5 times the height of the window.
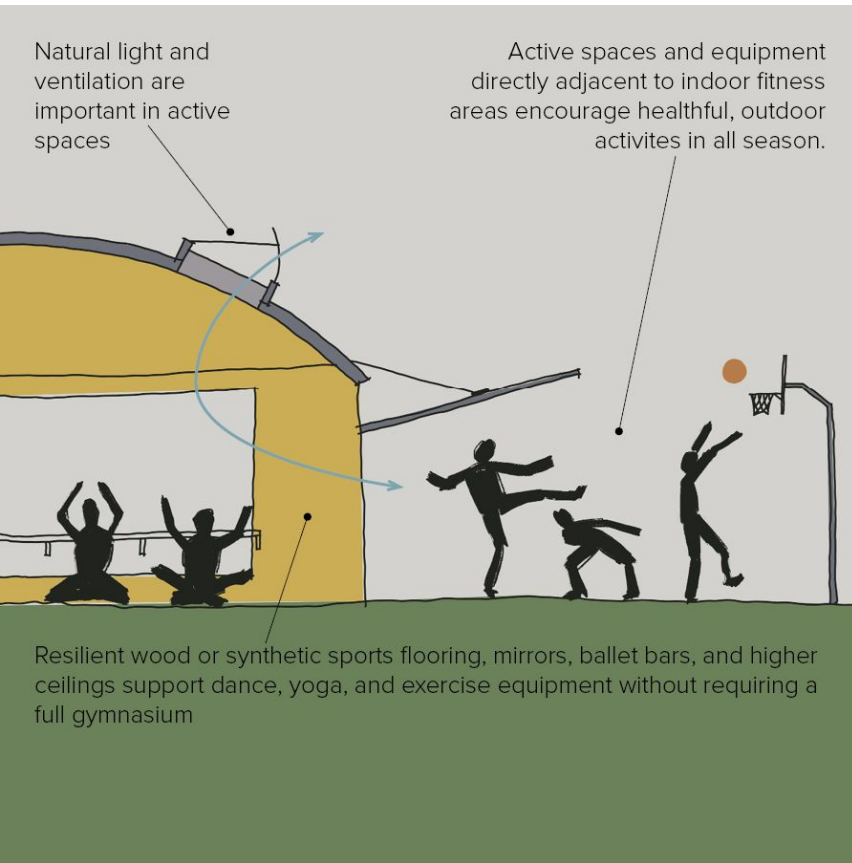
Daylighting

Problem
A wide range of daylighting and inconsistent window strategies negatively impact student health, well-being, and performance.

Solution
An integrated, balanced daylighting plan including glare control, various shading options, and circadian lighting to mimic natural daylight patterns supports student well-being, learning, and building performance

Natural light and ventilation are important in active spaces

Active spaces and equipment directly adjacent to indoor fitness areas encourage healthful, outdoor activites in all season.

Resilient wood or synthetic sports flooring, mirrors, ballet bars, and higher ceilings support dance, yoga, and exercise equipment without requiring a full gymnasium
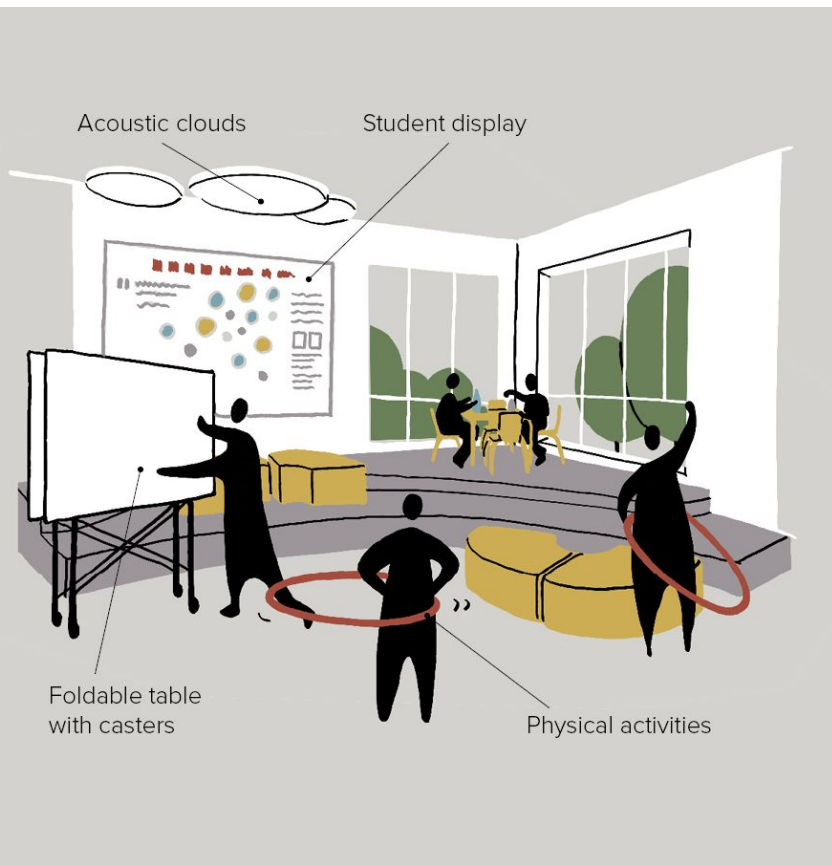
Health, Fitness, & Wellness

Problem
Health is paramount for living a fulfilling life. However, physical fitness is often relegated to a single class period.

Solution
Instead of a narrowed focus on athletics, a holistic emphasis on health, fitness, and wellness that is integrated throughout one's daily experience is a way to promote lifelong healthy habits.

Acoustic clouds

Student display

Foldable table
with casters

Physical activities

Whole Body Learning

Problem
Research has shown that movement and physical activity improves cognitive functioning and long-term retention of information; yet, most conventional classrooms limit movement.

Solution
To accommodate whole-body learning practices, it's vital to create environments conducive to different types of movement and activity through good acoustics, varied materials, and different levels of privacy.

Privacy curtain

Semi-Private

Private

Public

A Gradient of Privacy for various engagements

Layers of Privacy

Problem
While bringing counseling and support services to the heart of the school is important for de-stigmatizing, it does create unique problems of privacy for sensitive engagement.

Solution
Provide adjacent seminar rooms or offices to retreat to, or find discreet scheduling services to allow for private engagement with students.

Agency / Flexibility Patterns

Flexible wall partitioning systems to create larger learning suites when desired

Transparent movable doors lead to Central Commons for breakout learning

Movable furnishing systems and adjustable height work surfaces
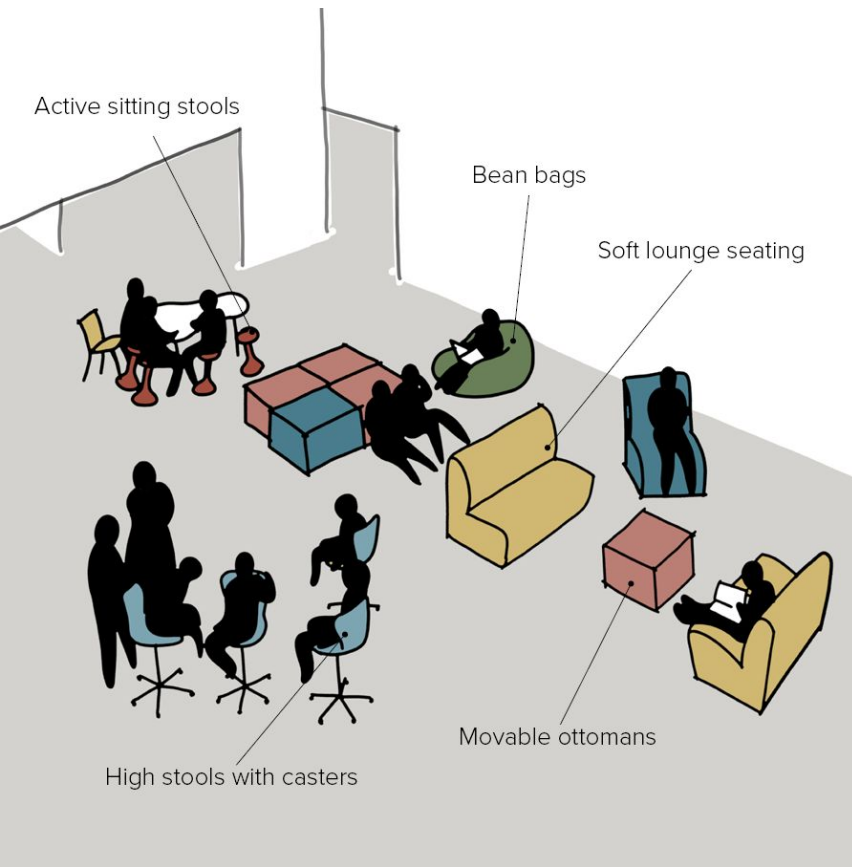
Agile Spaces

Problem
Typical design approaches are often rigid, limiting functionality and ability to innovate.

Solution
Create spaces that adapt to the context of the situation and the needs of the people who use them.

Active sitting stools

Bean bags

Soft lounge seating

High stools with casters

Movable ottomans

Variable Seating

Problem
Learning environments that only have standard desks and chairs limit students' choice, autonomy, and freedom of movement while also limiting the types of activities and learning experiences they are capable of accommodating.

Solution
Having a variety of seating options increases student autonomy and contributes to an ergonomic learning environment, a factor that leads to productivity, health, and wellness.
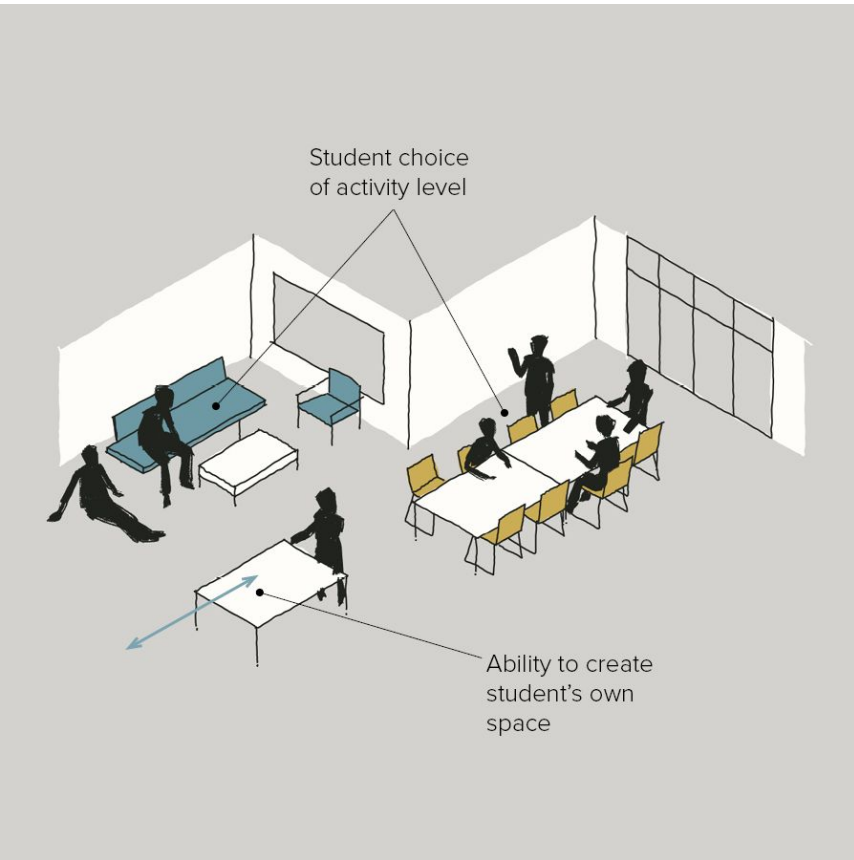
Student choice
of activity level

Ability to create
student's own
space

Choice in Environment

Problem
Autonomy plays a significant role in helping individuals thrive and yet students often lack control over how and where they learn.

Solution
By creating partially-separated, visually-transparent learning environments with a variety of furniture, student can choose among a variety of learning environments.
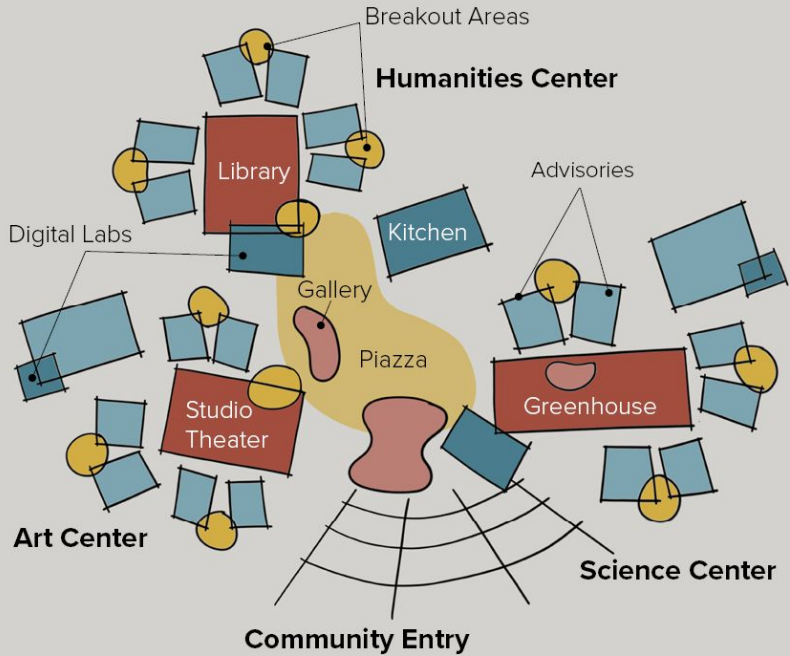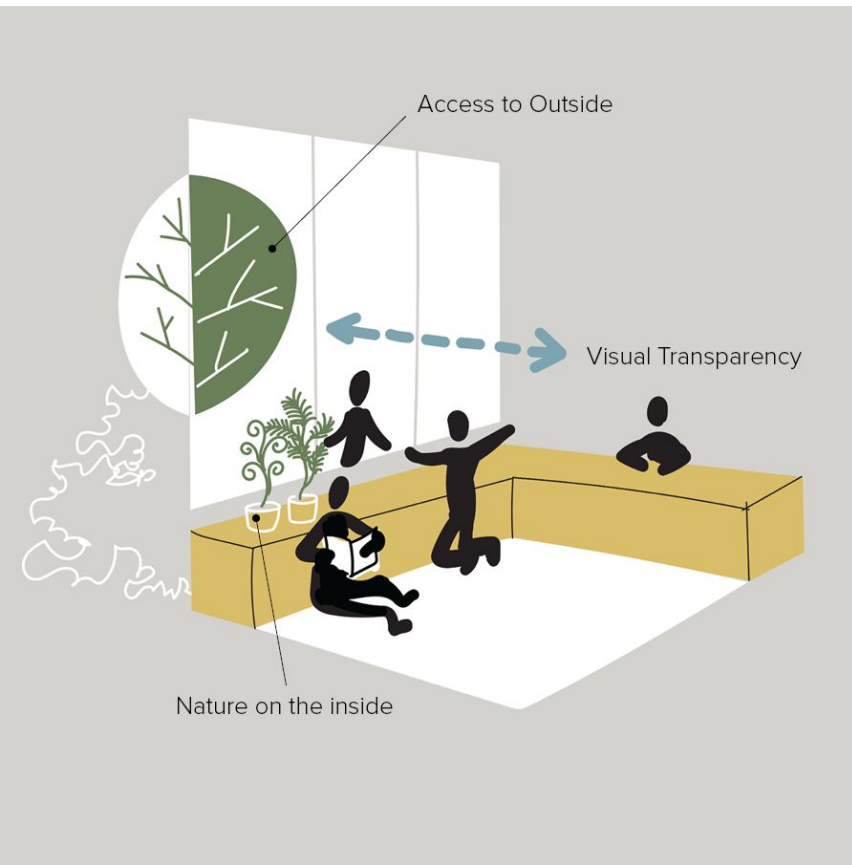
Connected Campus

Problem
Schools & campuses are often: disconnected, difficult to navigate, and institutional feeling in a way that hinders learning.

Solution
Creative, innovative schools thoughtfully consider how to organize their entire campus to facilitate meaningful learning experiences and provide a sense of belonging.

Labels in figure: Access to Outside, Visual Transparency, Nature on the inside

Indoor-Outdoor Connections

Problem
It is the essence of being human to want to connect with nature, yet many schools are built like fortresses and limit access to outdoor areas and the natural world.

Solution
Transparency, doorways, and indoor plants are some of the simple, safe, and effective ways to make meaningful connections with nature.
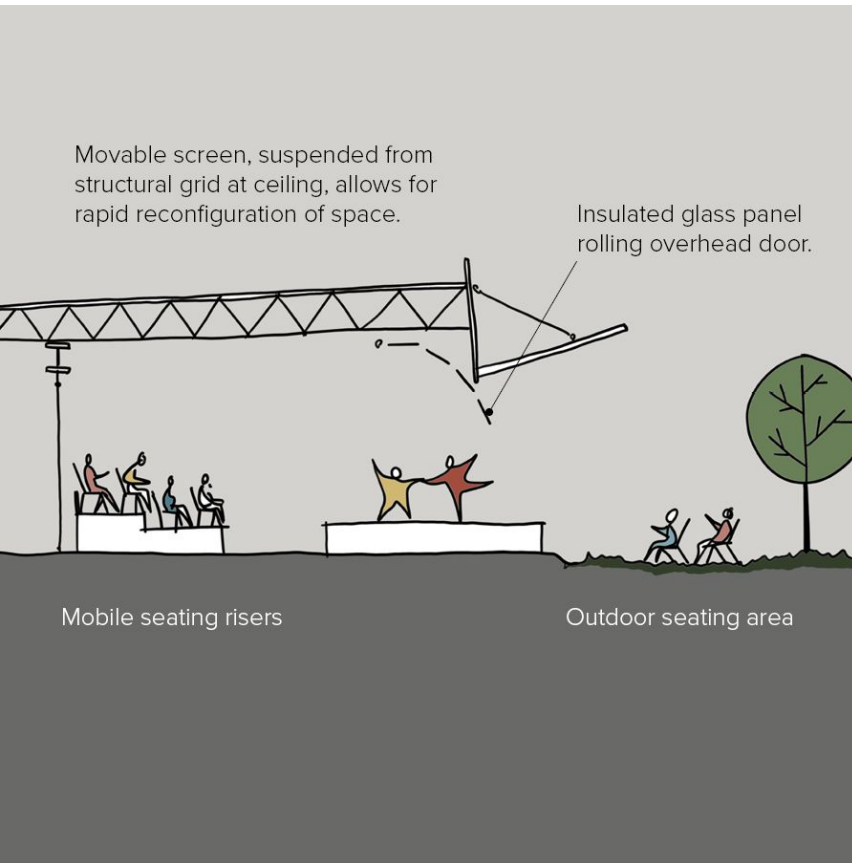
Outdoor Classroom

Problem
In conventional schools, classrooms represent "inside-the-box" design

Solution
The outdoor classroom can come in many forms, but the main idea is to serve as a catalyst for outdoor learning.

Movable screen, suspended from structural grid at ceiling, allows for rapid reconfiguration of space.

Insulated glass panel rolling overhead door.

Mobile seating risers

Outdoor seating area

Integrating the Arts & Performance

Problem
The arts are critically important for developing the creativity and problem-solving skills that are of increasing importance in today's economy and yet they are often relegated to the fringes of curriculum.

Solution
Given their educational relevance, it is beneficial to embed environments for creativity, the arts, and performance spaces throughout the school.
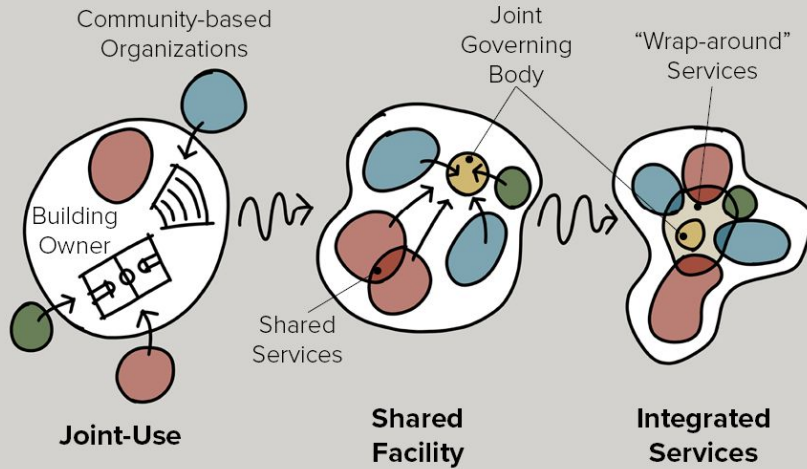
Community-based Organizations

Joint Governing Body

"Wrap-around" Services

Building Owner

Shared Services

Joint-Use

Shared Facility

Integrated Services

Joint, Shared, & Integrated Use

Problem
Trillions of dollars are invested in school construction each year yet there is a surprising lack of integration and shared use beyond conventional school activities.
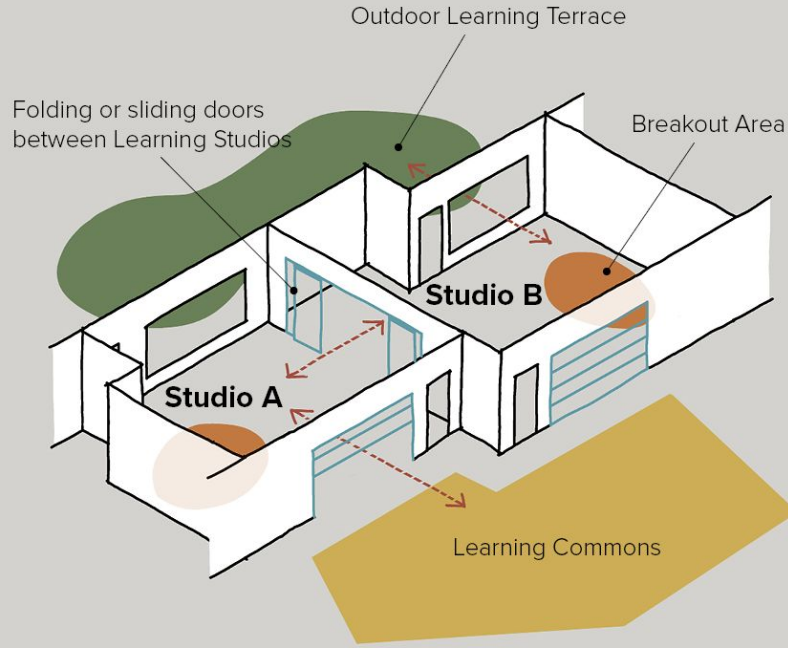
Solution
Integrating other uses such as health services, a community rec center, or a recording studio not only makes the facility more of an asset to the entire community, but it also connects young people to more authentic learning opportunities.

Instructional Practices + Collaboration Patterns

Outdoor Learning Terrace

Folding or sliding doors
between Learning Studios

Breakout Area

Studio B

Studio A

Learning Commons

Each Learning Studio (21st Century version of classroom) has it's own
entry, breakout area, and outdoor connection, and may operate as a
single studio or combined with the adjacent studio into a Learning Suite.
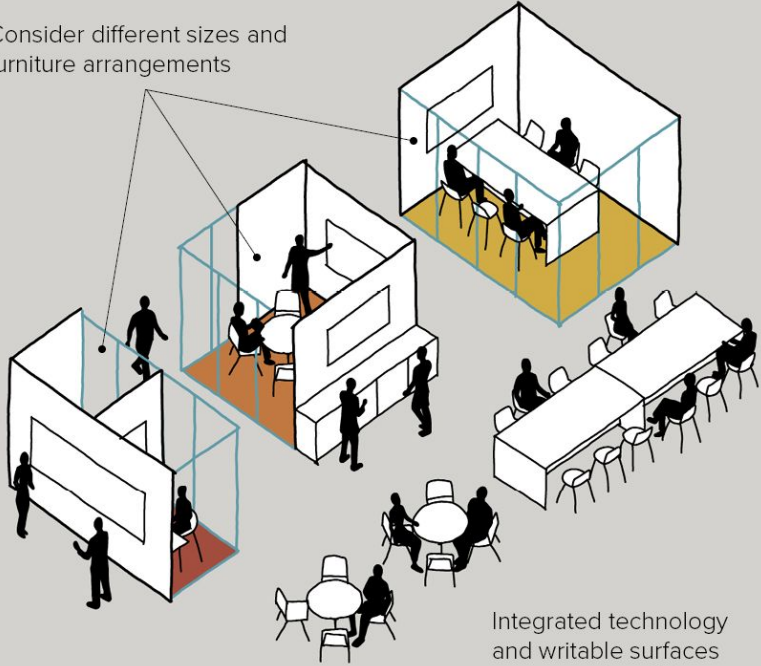
Learning Suite

Problem
Classrooms of the past are largely made for individual teacher-directed instruction.

Solution
Create opportunities for teachers and students to share spaces and collaborate. This increases the quality and variety of teaching and learning opportunities

Consider different sizes and furniture arrangements

Integrated technology and writable surfaces compounds collaboration

Small Group Room

Problem
Not all learning suited to large classrooms designed to support 20-30 students doing the same thing at one time.

Solution
Create accessible and transparent rooms distributed throughout the school to accommodate small groups.
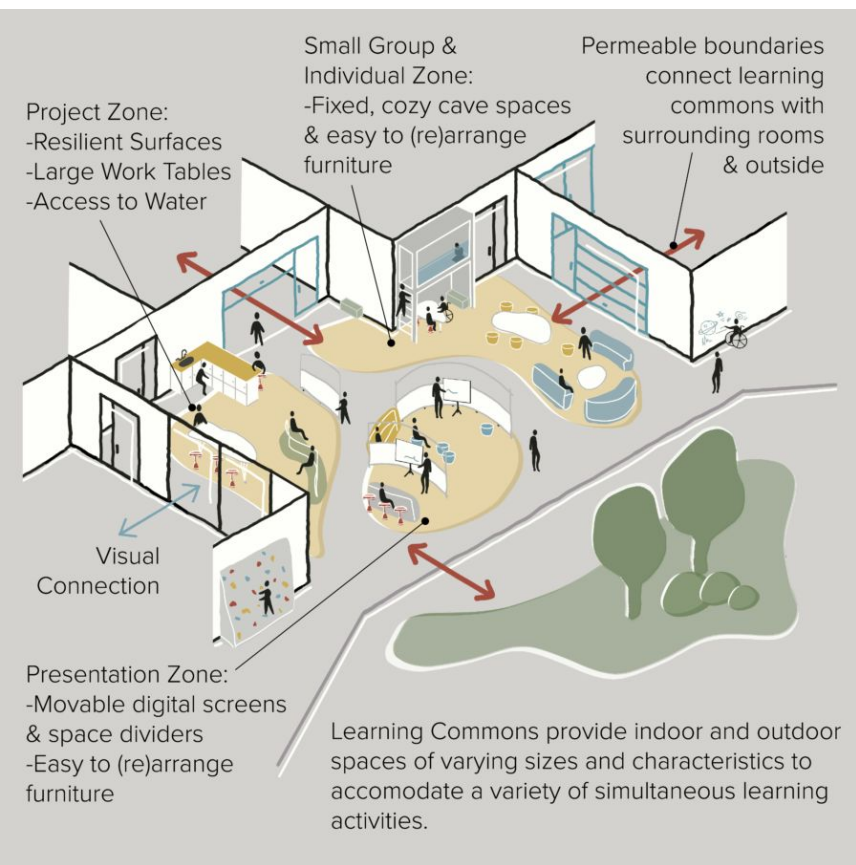
Project Zone:
-Resilient Surfaces
-Large Work Tables
-Access to Water

Small Group &
Individual Zone:
-Fixed, cozy cave spaces
& easy to (re)arrange
furniture

Permeable boundaries
connect learning
commons with
surrounding rooms
& outside

Visual
Connection

Presentation Zone:
-Movable digital screens
& space dividers
-Easy to (re)arrange
furniture

Learning Commons provide indoor and outdoor
spaces of varying sizes and characteristics to
accomodate a variety of simultaneous learning
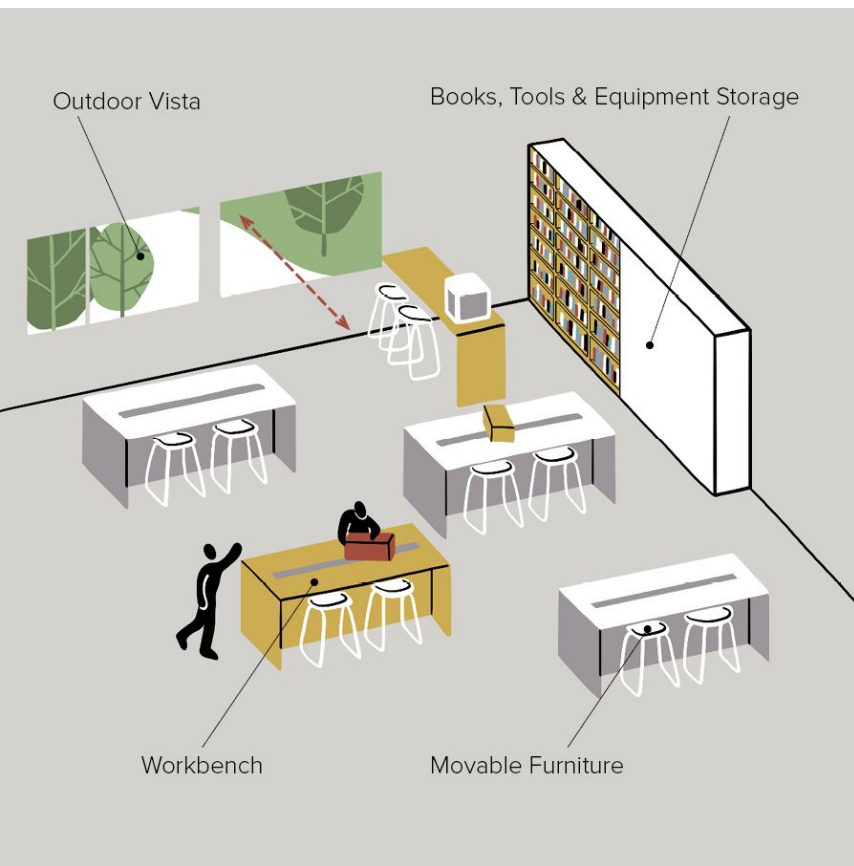activities.

Learning Commons

Problem
The classroom model creates a
barrier that inhibits teacher
collaboration and authentic
interdisciplinary learning.

Solution
Learning Commons has support
diverse learning experiences that
connect people, foster wellness,
and catalyze learner agency.

Outdoor Vista

Books, Tools & Equipment Storage

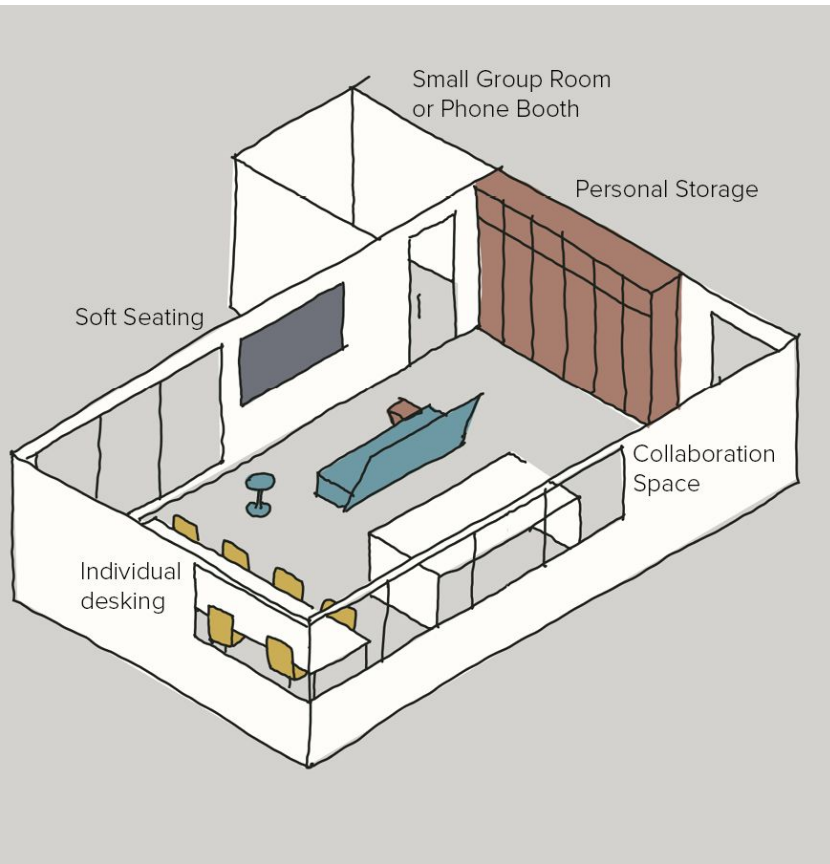Workbench

Movable Furniture

STEAM Workshop

Problem
Interdisciplinary, STE(A)M learning has the potential to nurture learners creativity, inventiveness, and problem-solving skills, but without spaces that allow for large, messy hands-on projects, it can be challenging to do well.

Solution
Mastery Workshops are customized, hands-on spaces where students and educators can work side-by-side to create connections between learning experiences and learning demonstration.
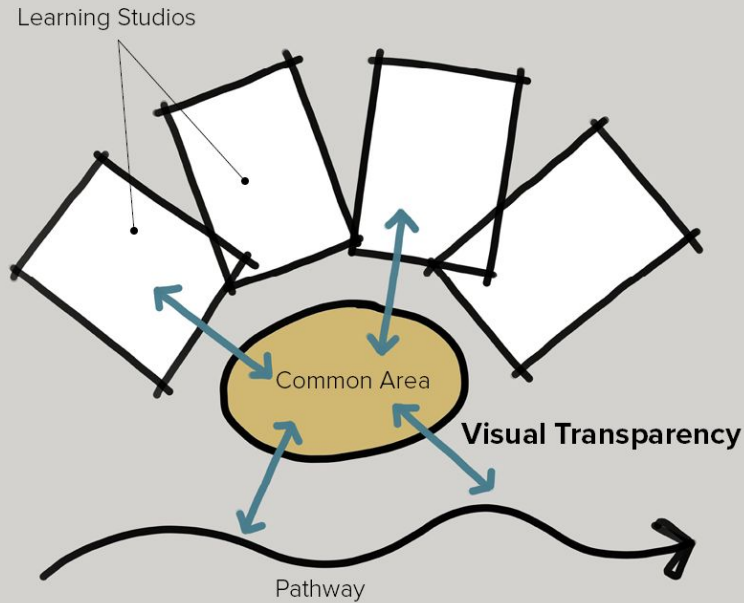
Small Group Room
or Phone Booth

Personal Storage

Soft Seating

Collaboration
Space

Individual
desking

Teacher Collaboration Room

Problem

Shifting educational and pedagogical paradigms require increased collaboration among teachers; yet, there is often no space designed specifically for this purpose.

Solution

A designated, welcoming space for teachers to work individually and in teams is critical for meaningful collaboration. It can be beneficial to embedded this space in a learning community, connected to the learning commons.
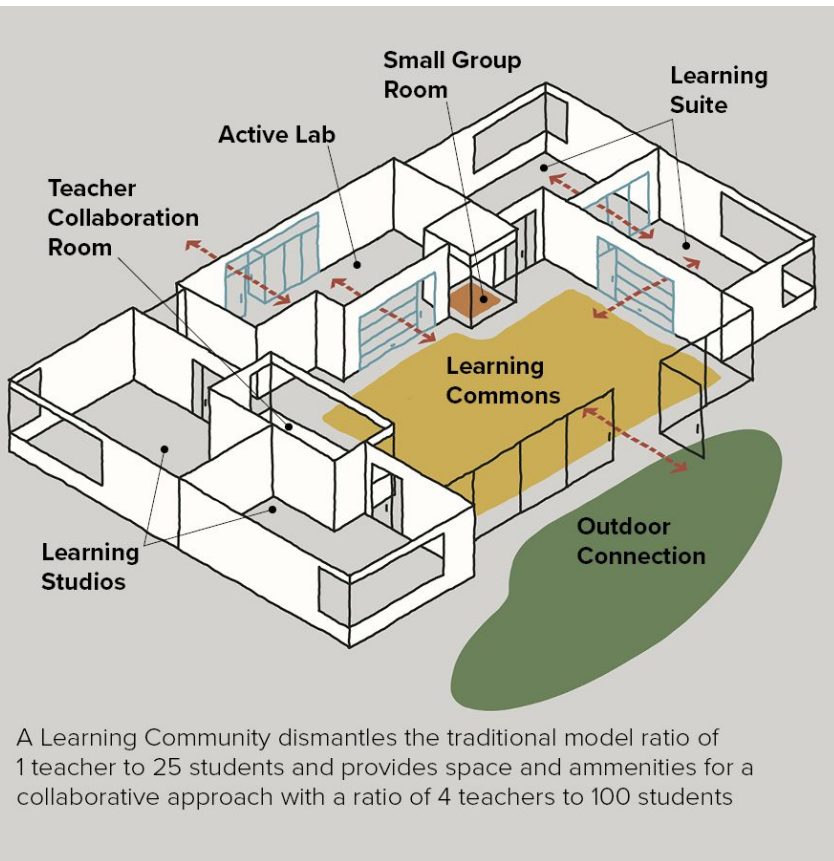
Transparency

Problem
Conventional schools are typically comprised of many single-use rooms that are visually and physically isolated from nearby spaces and limiting opportunities for connection and collaboration.

Solution
Designing spaces that prioritize transparency, on the other hand, creates connected environments that showcase and celebrates learning, increases natural daylight, and promotes interdisciplinary collaboration.

A Learning Community dismantles the traditional model ratio of 1 teacher to 25 students and provides space and ammenities for a collaborative approach with a ratio of 4 teachers to 100 students

Learning Community

Problem
Individual classrooms along a narrow hallway creates isolated silos of learning.

Solution
A variety of spaces encourage collaboration, joy, and belonging while supporting many different learning activities and experiences.

Community Connection Patterns

Branding as a unique element
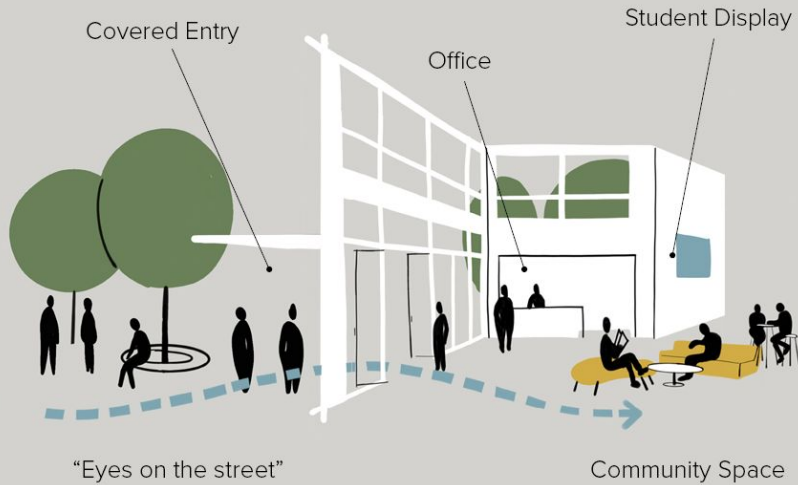
Local artisans creating furniture or structural elements

Local Trees

Local Signature

Problem
Cookie cutter schools feel institutional, often lacking warmth, beauty, and a sense of locality.

Solution
Include elements of your school to embrace and celebrate the unique people, place, and culture of your community.
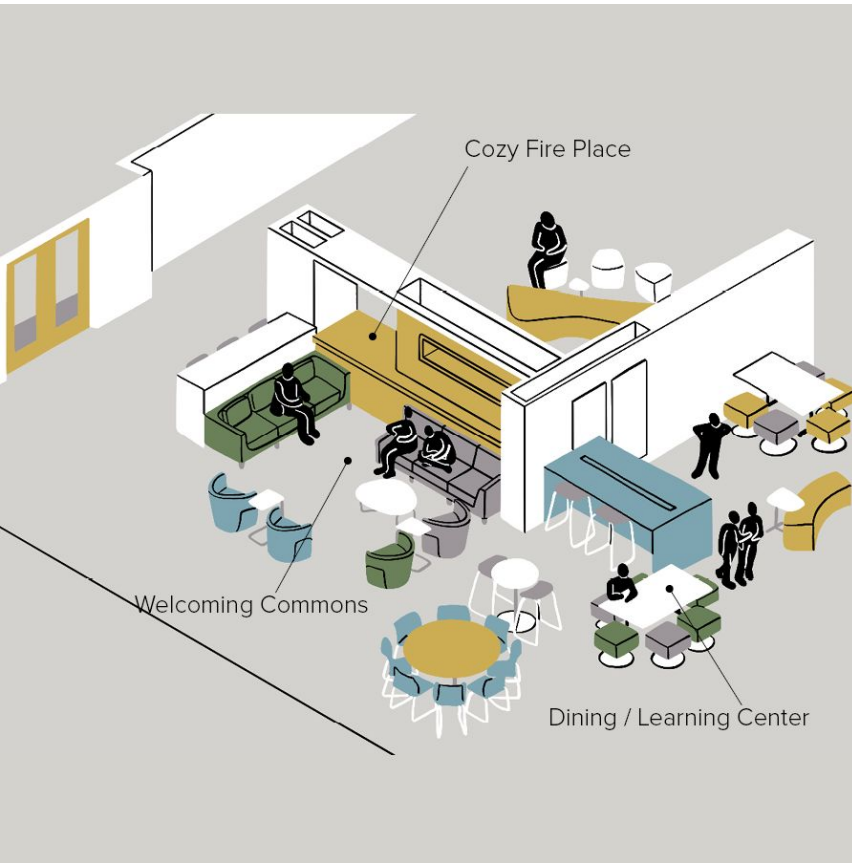
Welcoming Entry

Problem
In many schools a series of high security checkpoints make a visitor's first impression cold and disconnected.

Solution
Invite families and visitors with covered entries, gathering spaces, access to people, and inviting features.

The Family Room

Problem
Schools don't provide space for family members to gather, connect, and experience school with their students.

Solution
Create environments that invite family connections and parent involvement.

Learning happens everywhere in the neighborhood

Neighborhood as School

Problem
In most conventional schools are disconnected from their surrounding context, missing opportunities to leverage local assets.

Solution
By thinking of the entire neighborhood as part of the school, relationships with community organizations and local industries can be leveraged to reshape when, where, and how learning takes place.