

# W. EDWARD BALMER SCHOOL

FEASIBILITY STUDY  
NORTHBRIDGE, MA

School Building Committee  
Meeting

JANUARY 16, 2018



Massachusetts School Building Authority  
*Funding Affordable, Sustainable, and Efficient Schools in Partnership with Local Communities*



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1. Review of Guiding Principles of Design
  2. Preliminary Landscape Architecture Design Discussion
  3. Preliminary Exterior Building Design Discussion
  4. Questions, Comments, Feedback

## Overall:

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

- Create a **happy, cheerful, inspiring** place for children and adults
- Building should serve the **student** population and the **community**
- **Community-centric** overall design theme
- Aesthetic of the facility should **fit into the** existing **neighborhood** context...contemporary but timeless
- **Entire campus** is a learning environment
- Provide Space for **outdoor learning**
- Design a school that integrates and embodies **Sustainability**
- Provide **ubiquitous technology**-rich environments
- Include infrastructure that **supports future technology**, that can **evolve** over time
- Provide **flexibility** at a wide variety of scales: long-term, short term, minute to minute
- Pursue **cost-effective, pragmatic, and efficient** solutions
- Provide high-quality **natural daylight** in as many spaces as possible
- Organize building for **easy way-finding**



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

## Safety and Security:

- Use landscape elements to **delineate the campus boundary**, to signal “eyes on the street”
- Organize building into **public & private zones** with the ability to secure areas of the building
- Minimize exterior access points
- Provide emergency vehicle access to the entire building perimeter if possible
- Allow **visual observation** of parking and approach from administration suite
- Articulate **strategies** for evacuation and shelter in place
- Design a **multi-step entry sequence**, including a secured vestibule
- **Provide balance** between safety and openness/ welcoming environment
- **Separate** pedestrians, bikes, busses, vans, parent vehicles, and delivery vehicles
- **Minimize distances** from drop-off points to the school entrance(s)
- **Plan** to accommodate tractor-trailer deliveries – should be separate from student play areas





## GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

### Educational:

- Break down the **scale** of the building by providing grade-level-based **small learning communities** (SLCs) with **extended learning spaces**
- Design flexible SLCs to allow possible **looping and/or multi-age** organizational configuration
- **Flexibility** of design to allow **real-time, short-term, and long-term** educational activities
- Provide integrated spaces for **project-based learning** and **making things**
- Design the **media center/library** as a **central hub** with satellite library program spaces
- **Minimize barriers** between special education and regular education
- Provide spaces at strategic points in the school that **accommodate** students having difficulties while preserving their privacy and **honoring** their differences with **dignity**
- Equip pairs of general education classrooms with **shared small group** to serve push-in and pull out activities
- Provide places for **teachers** to **coordinate, collaborate,** and plan together, **close** to their learning communities
- **Anticipate future change** in educational delivery methods



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

## Specials/ Commons:

- **Equip** extended learning areas with wet/messy zone, teaching zone, creative collaboration/brainstorming zone, quiet zone(s), performance/demonstration zone
- Design a **cafeteria** with a **variety** of eating experiences; flexible, with capability to handle a variety of assembly and other functions beyond dining
- **Zone** Library/Media Center into multiple areas both with centralized teaching area, media areas, collaborative small group room(s) and A/V lab spaces
- Maintain a **relationship** between **stage**, **gymnasium** and **cafeteria** to maximize flexibility of event sizes
- Position Cafeteria, Classrooms, and Playgrounds to **allow flow** between these three areas for recess
- Position play grounds with **respect** for classrooms





# LANDSCAPE CONTEXT





# GLACIAL PAST









SERENE QUIET FLOW





# SHAPING THE LAND





# INDUSTRIAL LEGACY

 Horiuchi-Solien Landscape Architects

# LANDSCAPE DESIGN IMAGES



OPTION C3.1b  
SITE PLAN AND CIRCULATION





## Main Entry Plaza /Drop off



*Entire campus is a learning environment*



Main Entry Plaza /  
Drop off

lantern announces entry





## Main Entry Plaza /Drop off



rooted to the landscape

gardens near building



indoor/ outdoor relationship



gardens near building



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indoor/ outdoor relationship



## Playground equipment – older grades



technical play – absorptive surface



# Playground equipment – older grades



8

Wood fiber surface



9



## Playground equipment – younger grades



Synthetic absorptive surface



## Playground equipment – younger grades



Wood fiber surface



# Accessible playground equipment

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Accessible playground equipment





Musical playground equipment





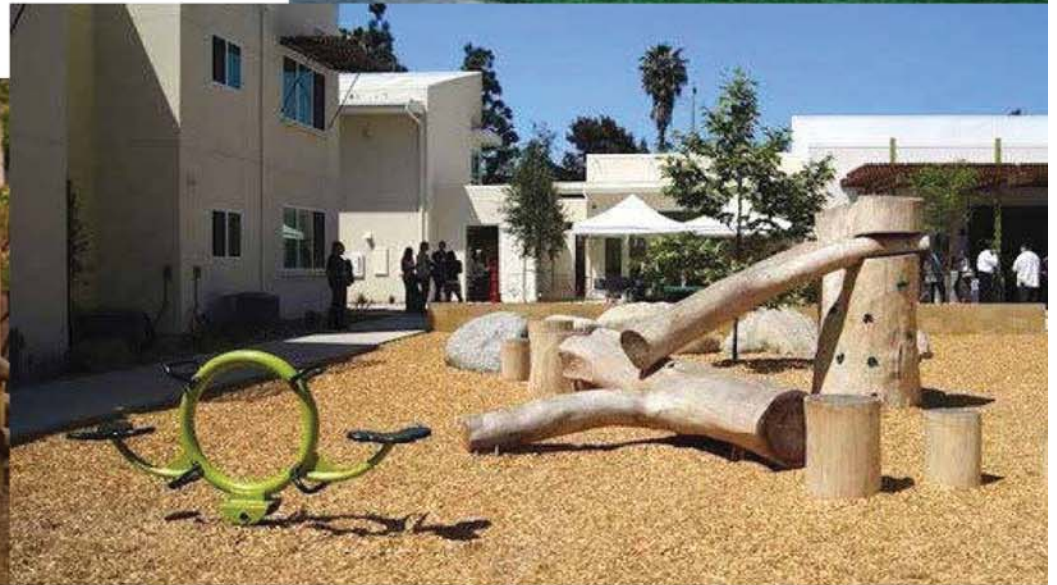
Hard playscape with stenciled games





Natural playground





Natural playground





Natural playground





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*Outdoor learning environments*





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*Outdoor classroom*



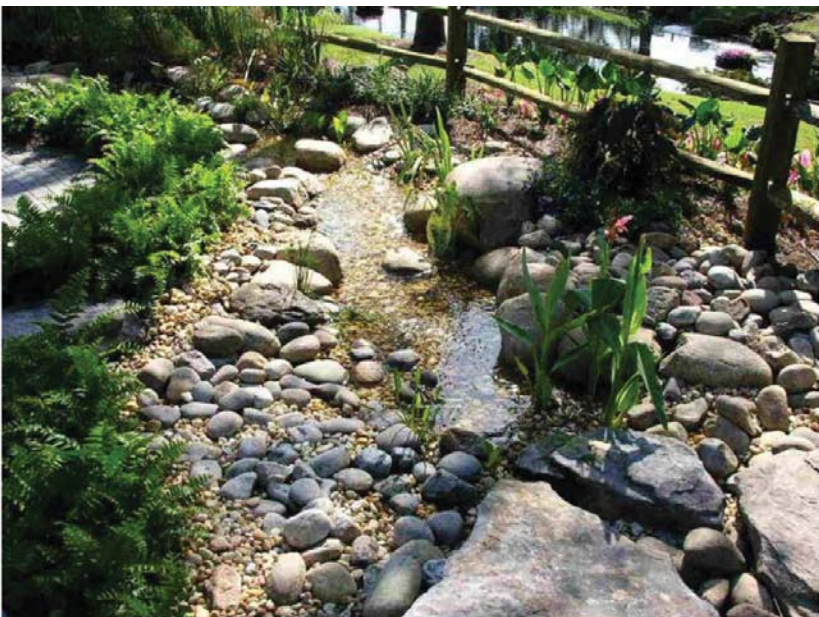






*Integrating special education:* Sensory Gardens









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*Outdoor learning:* nature trail development





*Outdoor fitness gym/ trail for Vail Field perimeter*





**BUILDING CONTEXT**

**IMAGES**





rooted, connected



contemporary in context





forms in light  
surface articulation  
functional expression





announce entry  
scale – relatable by detail



proto-modern  
scale – surface articulation





scale – materials, massing



entry  
subtle palette



**BUILDING EXTERIOR  
DESIGN IMAGES**





*Contemporary but timeless*





Step down to *scale* of a child





*happy, cheerful, inspiring*





*Provide balance between safety and openness*



# Announcement of entry







*Neighborhood context*





*Scale elements at entry*





*Scale elements at entry*





*happy, cheerful, inspiring*





*Visual texture*





*Visual texture*





*Massing* used to mediate *scale*





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How does the building meet the landscape?





Base of natural materials; lighter materials above





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*Small learning communities*



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*Outdoor learning on display*



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Natural materials close at hand





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Contemporary but timeless





Nature, geometric shapes, color, materials





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Outside/ inside  
*Natural light*





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*Outdoor learning, related to indoors*



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*Outdoor learning, related to indoors*





Rich natural materials, *sustainability*





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Expression of program on exterior





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Façade strategies



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*Thank you  
for your  
attention!*

*Questions?  
Comments?*