Schools as Community Hubs
Alum Rock Union School District

Focus Group Workshop
November 28th 10:30-11:45 am | 2022

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Next Steps:

Incorporate content from this interview into the Ed Specs design guidelines—then schedule round two video conference meetings with the same group to review the draft chapter for input in, March 2023.

Participants were oriented to understand what a Master Plan is and what Ed Specs are. Then highlights from the Ed Specs Visioning Workshop were shown, concluding with a list of learning shifts produced by Ed Specs Workshop participants as a vision for the future on the following page. After that, participants were asked a series of questions to confirm the program and vision for the future.

Learning Shifts Focus on Student Empowerment- DRAFT

ARUSD's learning environments will support students' development of *mind, body and spirit.* They will be empowered with the opportunity to try different ways of learning to discover how they learn best, *find their spark* and to *keep the curiosity* they were born with to become *expert lifelong learners*. ARUSD will work to give students and families who need additional support to have an *equal chance to thrive*, meeting all their needs.

EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO BECOME EXPERT LEARNERS
Multi-sensory and multi-intelligences learning
More control at the hands of the students
Independent choice and/or collaborative elective periods
Less teacher-directed time
Students setting individual goals
Student-driven activities
Student-chosen schedules
More independent work time
Relaxation rooms
No school uniforms

HIGHER COLLABORATION
Team collaboration across studies, play, and extra-curricular activities
Flexible and collaborative opportunities

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES
Spaces to support personal and basic needs (i.e. laundry services)
Full day kindergarten

MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT
More outside and exploration time
Play and naturalistic movement
Bring community into the class
Indoor and outdoor use spaces

Program Background:

- Please share and describe any existing community partnerships

- Below is a list of community partnerships gleaned from a Quality for All Strategic Plan focusing on Pre-Natal through third grade. Please confirm they still exist and describe how they work:
  - Applied Survey Research (evaluation partner)
  - Families in ARUESD
  - FIRST 5 Santa Clara County
  - Grail Family Services
  - Healthier Kids Foundation
  - Kidango
  - San Juan Bautista
  - Santa Clara County Office of Education/Head Start
  - SOMOS Mayfair

Program Background:

- What is the role of the Community Liaison at each campus?

Each campus has a community liaison whose role is to be a conduit between the community, community organizations, and school needs. They are a support system for Strengthening Families programs for family gatherings and parental education through the Alum Rock County Partners.

- **Existing partnerships that serve a large range of grade levels include:**
    Alum Rock County Partner
    New Hope for Youth
    City Peace Project
    City Year
    A.A.C.I. (Asian American Community Involvement)
    Sound Solutions

Before going into the Big Picture Questions, reference images below were shared. Participants were invited to leave comments on the photos.

Big Picture Questions:

- Are there peer institutions or specific facilities of this nature you've seen that you've liked (or didn't)? What did you like (or dislike) about them?

- What makes ARUSD unique?

- In what ways does ARUSD help families?

- Looking Ahead 10-15 years, how would it be changing? What is your ideal vision?

- Do any campuses have joint use agreements?

- What infrastructure would empower teacher and family collaboration?

- What spaces are currently hosting community or family programs, and how are they falling short in supporting connection with the ARUSD educators?

Big Picture Questions:

- Would a dedicated community resource space be of value on each ARUSD campus, or would flex gathering spaces sufficiently serve this purpose?

- What spaces would allow languages and cultures to be connected in richer ways? For example, could we re-imagine the Admin to be a Welcoming Entry that incorporates ways to make the various cultures and special populations feel welcome (i.e. display of student work, colors, materials, display screen announcing local cultural events, etc.). Could there be a space that allows parents and caregivers to linger outside and/or inside of Admin to connect with each other?

- What traditions or events exist to help create a sense of belonging for the broader school community?

- Is there anything else we should know about a vision to have schools better support their families?

Participants were asked questions to draw out their ideas to improve the learning environments to support the mission and vision of Alum Rock USD.

Reference Projects Shared by Participants:

- West side campuses are modernized and host integrated wellness Facilities in ways Alum Rock is interested

The first question was intended to see if participants had reference projects to share with or felt that they were exemplary, whether it is in ARUSD or outside of the district. The following pages show the reference projects discussed.

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Sections:

1. Activities

2. Current Challenges

3. Design Objectives

4. Affordances

5. Sizing and Adjacencies

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1
Activities

- Educational health courses and exercise programs for families

- Multi-cultural and Seasonal events such as:
  Black History Month
  Individual campus traditions for site specific demographics that the adults within the school community already uphold
  Lunar New Year
  Multicultural night where each grade or even each class takes on self educating and presenting a different culture
  Gingerbread house making
  Winter showcases

- Supporting families registered with foster and migrant services

- Donation drives for basic personal needs and school supplies

- Clothes exchange or thrift nights

- Active and maintained food pantry

1
Activities

- Family education pertaining to supporting students through every grade level and personal developmental milestones

- Family education regarding sensitive topics

- Family and teacher collaboration

2
Current Challenges

- The family and community programs that ARUSD is interested in hosting at a community hub facility require extra storage space than what is currently available at any site.

- There is a lack of staffing required to organize and supervise evening or weekend events for family training or connection. More programs would arise naturally with the proper resources.

- The lack of a modernized, single-point of entry makes supporting community events more difficult given there isn't a standardized sign-in or security measure on site. This also perpetuates the issue of less than ideal family and staff connection, given there is no welcome center for parents and guardians to congregate in and develop relationships with staff naturally.

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2
Current
Challenges

- Parent and teacher collaboration tapers at the middle school level. Family engagement is less built-in to the educational fabric and there is an increased assumption of maturity around older students that leads to families participating less. There needs to be more encouragement in giving middle school children the space to see and be seen as children, alongside the responsibilities they take on outside of school. Family trainings around educational support need to better emphasize that continuing a close relationship with the school is foundational to supporting a child's education in and out of the classroom.

3

Design
Objectives

Ideas for the physical environment to support the vision for learning

- The ideal community hub would **serve the community's needs in multiple ways**, including providing laundry services, a clothes closet, and a student accessible food pantry. Essentially, it should support family functioning and address personal concerns that **affect children's ability to feel safe and engaged at school**.

- Increased storage for goods and equipment is needed. For example, adequate closet space for P.E. materials, cubbies or lockers etc.

- Community hubs should **encompass a digital or physical resource library for student and family use**, as well as serve as a professional development training hub and family training hub. There is an interest in these family services also **supporting health and nutritional practices** via dedicated health check programs, for example spaces to measure blood pressure and diabetes levels. Additionally, if the space could support after school exercise or dance programs, that would serve family needs and relationship building.

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3
Design
Objectives

Ideas for the physical environment to support the vision for learning

- This hub space should be supported by proper parking and drive access, as well as adequate safety lighting for evening gatherings. Something to keep in mind when planning this hub is accessibility through location. If each site cannot support a community hub, then **the communal location should be central to public transportation** to make it accessible to amilies who don't have cars.

4
Affordances

Furniture & Equipment

- Displays and signage that promote multiple language/cultural populations such as English, Spanish, and Vietnamese (the largest language demographics in the community currently) are a necessity to promote inclusion.

- LGBTQ+ friendly displays and resources to offer visual/flagship support that encourages conversation from visitors of all ages and introduces the topic for family dialogue.

- Conversation-starter posters/displays that set a parent at ease to ask about sensitive topic areas.

- Movable and reconfigurable furniture to support multiple types of events and make space for any exercise programs.

4
Affordances

Technology

- Digital resource libraries, if provided, should include communal technology such as a computer lab for visitors.

- Programs and events should continue to be recorded and provided via email or website links to the community members that were unable to attend in person.

5
Sizing and Adjacencies

- A community space should be the size of two average classrooms and be reconfigurable.

- Satellite office(s), and a conference space off the hub could be used for various professional development or community liaison purposes.

- Separate parking access to a community hub would alleviate increased congestion from the extra programming and events.

Appendix

Please follow the links to the Mural board to see artifacts from the focus group interview and the Ed Specs Visioning Workshop link to see the Artifacts from the workshop.

Mural Link: HERE

Ed Specs Visioning Workshop Link: HERE