

Rockford Public Schools, District 205
Facilities Master Plan 2025 – 2030
Educator Workshop
Meeting Minutes

College and Career Education Center
Secondary Schools
Wednesday, October 11, 2023

Dr. Ehren Jarrett opened the meeting at 4:50 p.m., welcoming the staff who were in attendance. He spoke for a few minutes on the purpose of the meeting and how the attendees' input would assist in the vision for the future of Rockford Public Schools.

The DLR Group team introduced themselves.

Keri VanSant, Architect/Project Manager/Associate

Laura Beth Cochran, Architect/Principal

Dr. Tim Shimp – Educational Learning Designer/Associate

The meeting began with an ice breaker activity. Participants were asked to introduce themselves and give two words on their aspirations and goals for Rockford Public Schools.

Present were:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>School</u>
Brooke Imbach	Librarian	Guilford HS
Sabrina Cook	ESL Teacher	Jefferson HS
Heidi Dettman	Administration	Central Office
Scott Fabert-Church	Teacher	Guilford HS
Tina Lamb	Academy Coach	Jefferson HS
Brittany Glidden	Instructional Coach	East HS
Roy Sackmaster	ISS Teacher/Coach	East HS
Kevin Ryan	Computers	Eisenhower MS
Matthew Green	Teacher	Roosevelt CEC
Jessica Graefe	Director of Special Ed	Administration
Mindy Thompson	Teacher	East HS
Bridget French	Executive Director CCR	Administration
Ben Epperson	Executive Director Curriculum	Administration
Scott Sevey	Director of CCR	Administration
Dawn Myelle-Watson	Teacher	Jefferson HS
Joselyn Ludtke	Teacher/CIL	Auburn HS
Sherrill Pruitt	Teacher	Marshall MS
Sharon Davids	Teacher	Roosevelt HS
Jillian Myers	Teacher/CIL	Marshall MS
Dallas Turner	Instruction Coach	Marshall MS

Amber Lee-Black	Assistant Principal	Roosevelt HS
Melissa Wolf	Teacher/Director of Fine Arts	Guilford HS/Admin.
Greg Brown	Chief Financial Officer	Administration
Michael Phillips	Chief Operations Officer	Administration

The group's aspirations and goals for the schools included:

Maker spaces	Innovative/welcome	Happy spaces
Hands on	Traditional/Explore	Control/security
Science labs	More room	Culturally better
See/support	Big picture	Functional/flexible
Science/voice	Collaborative spaces	Updated storage
Classrooms	Experiential partner	Real change
Functional space	Opportunity/tech ed	

Dr. Shimp addressed the group on why they were coming together. The group has different perspectives and a wealth of information to offer in the vision process for the future of our schools. This is not just about the kids, but also about the staff and how they can use their spaces for better outcomes for the students.

DLR Group's presentation included participant engagement opportunities throughout.

Why change?

Pictures of classrooms from Samarian times, 15th century and 2018 were shown one-by-one and the participants were asked if they knew what they were and when. Similarities of schools across the decades were discussed. Many things have changed, but many things have not.

Why do we need to change?

Saturation rate is when something has reached 25% of the U.S. population. The timeline for saturation is happening quicker every day. We are currently preparing students for jobs that do not exist today. Yet 80% of all businesses will still need that human aspect. It is our responsibility to make sure students are prepared for the future.

A video was shown of work being completed by robots/AI intelligence. Participants were then asked to discuss at their tables how that video made them feel and how the schools should respond to the way the world is changing.

Feedback included:

Give kids the opportunity to use creative thinking in the classrooms.

Makes us nervous because it shows how much technology has taken over. Our education practices are still stuck back in pen and paper and standardized testing.

Dr. Shimp shared some of the passions and dreams the students shared in their workshop. Twenty-four of the twenty-five kids said they learned best by experiencing. Something to keep in mind is how do we plan for all of our kids, including life skills students? Those kids who go out in the field, how do they fit in? So, it's scary, but it's also an opportunity for us. We need to make sure we give our kids options after graduation.

A Day in the Life of a Student at Rockford Public Schools

Small groups were asked to develop a student persona based on a typical RPS student.

They were then asked to graph how much time is currently spent in a typical school day on specific categories such as large group, small group, collaboration, active, creating, presenting, experiencing, inquiring, evaluating. The group shared their student personas and then shared their percentages in specific categories.

Feedback included:

The largest amount of time spent in a current school day across the groups was in Large Groups. Next top time increments were in experiencing, small group/collaborating, and active. These categories were between 5% & 20%.

Personas across the groups for their students were very similar.

Adulting is hard.

Laura Beth said they were going to talk about school design and why it is important. She shared with the group the exercise with the students that morning, in which they stepped to one side of the demarcation line or the other, depending on which word motivated them more. Every student is different, so their individual nature impacts their learning in a big way. In a big way, teachers and role models impact that progress every single day. But the built environment can impact the student's learning progress as much as 16% to the positive or negative. The DLR team believes in research-based data inspired designs so that when they are making creative decisions and creating special space for teaching and learning, that it is proven to create healthy outcomes and improved, elevated student-teacher engagement. The framework for making this is called FINNS (Flexibility, Individualization, Naturalness and Nature, Stimulation).

Flexibility – Furniture for a variety of postures.

Individualization – Student center design that allows them to make choices

Nature and **N**aturalization – Daylight, acoustics, temperature control, lighting

Stimulation – Active corridors

Fundamentally – the more the students move, the more likely they are to be engaged in learning. And that can be in as much as a small shift in their seat, or the ability and choice to move from one activity to another, just to change posture.

DLR showed classroom layout options using the FINNS model.

The group was asked which layout option they thought would be most conducive to teacher success and student deep learning. After Laura Beth shared which layout works best, the group was asked if there were any reflections on why that might be?

Feedback included:

It provided the students and teachers with the opportunity to be adaptable in the moment, from one exercise to the next, and to change their space to suit the lay of the land.

Dr. Shimp shared some thoughts on effective teaching and learning in the spaces provided. Teachers will be a lot more effective when you have in-the-moment opportunities to do what you want to do, when you want to do it. We have to give our students options to be able to succeed in our changing world.

Pictures of different open spaces were shown to the group and asked what they thought of the spaces.

Feedback included:

Really like the natural light.

If we are going to use spaces like that, we are going to have to get away from the rigidity in the school – same classes, same time, every day. It's too rigid.

Would like to see classroom spaces and what they would look like.

If students feel like it is their space, they will respect the space.

Open spaces are great, but in addition to the classroom.

Keri shared that when they work with students, particularly high schoolers, one of the things they often hear is that we don't get enough choice and leniency in our learning. And then we are expected to be young, and students, and listening, and following along, and then we stop high school and we're supposed to be adults. We're supposed to know what we're doing. We're supposed to have a path, whether it is a trade program, studying abroad, or going to college perhaps. So, keep that in mind that as we're training the next generation, we are also

training them to be adults who will train the next generation. We need to give them the leniency and the respect to make those choices and not keep them overly sheltered.

A comment was made by a teacher that she loves wide-open spaces, but when looking at it, it does not look safe. It would be difficult, when needing to get the kids to someplace safe and secure, in those wide-open spaces. It's scary looking at all those wide-open spaces.

Dr. Shimp said it is important to remember that the pictures of the spaces are shown to the group to show examples of stimulation and flexibility. They are not saying this is what Rockford Schools 205 has to look like. You are the authorities, that's why we're doing this. What's the change you want to see? It should be driven by what you want for the kids, and the furniture and the design does not come first, it should never come first.

The group was then asked to graph a day in the life of an RPS student five years from now. If there were no barriers, would those percentages change?

Feedback included:

Large group was smaller and small group/collaborative/creative, inquiring, experiencing and active time increased across most of the groups.

One group's percentages didn't change a lot. They tend to be a practical group and with the constraints of standards, educational practices and things like that, they did not change much. They did give higher percentages to collaboration and experiencing.

Too much time is spent testing – students graduating spend over 172 days testing in their school career, which is the equivalent of one whole school year.

Need to allow kids to express themselves in writing. Most of my kids equate writing to a 5-paragraph essay, which I think is a dereliction of brain cells. If I give them a creative writing assignment, they don't know what to do with it. They write based on what they think they will be tested on, rather than exploring, creating, what they feel. I don't see kids that want to be an English Teacher because they are so stifled with the type of writing they equate with being successful.

Collaboration between classes and teachers, English and Social Studies partnered up, making sure when you're teaching writing, that there is a point behind it, or writing to inform.

We had open spaces in elementary and I didn't pay attention because they were open classrooms. When I got to Jr. High, we had the flexible walls and you could hear all the other classrooms and couldn't concentrate. I hope in the 30+ years since I've graduated High School, those types of buildings have greatly improved.

We need a lot more space to put kids in small groups.

For the last activity, the groups were asked to answer the following questions. They were handed sets of cards with information on them for each of the questions.

What type of learning do you want to see? Choose one card within the group.

Authentic, real world

What type of teaching do we need to support that learning? Choose one card within the group.

Teaching through facilitation, Differentiated teaching

What spaces are required to facilitate this type of teaching and learning? Choose three spaces within the group.

Professional Development area, creative spaces, learning suites, small group/small spaces, spaces easily adaptable.

What technology individual devices are needed to support this type of teaching and learning?

Flexible technology

What furniture is needed to support individual learning and teaching?

Flexible/adaptable, supports individual

What space is needed to support individual learning and teaching?

Adaptable spaces

Safety priorities?

Clean air, water, safe spaces, Community/business partnerships

Laura Beth thanked everyone for attending the meeting and asked them to please complete the questions on the exit survey they were handed. Dr. Shimp thanked the group for their input.

The meeting ended at 6:45 p.m.