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Wilmington Public Schools – Elementary School Building Project EDUCATIONAL PLANNING/PROGRAMMING WORK PLAN

Overview

This document outlines D+W's proposal for conducting planning and programming tasks for the Wilmington Public Schools' Elementary School Building project. The activities described below occur during the Feasibility Study and Schematic Design portions of the process, modules three and four respectively. Planning and Programming Activities include:

- Principals' Interviews and Educational Walk-thru
- Visioning Session #1, #2, #3, and #4
- Preparation of the Space Summaries
- Preparation of the Educational Program Narrative(s)

What follows is a brief description of each activity. Activities are listed in approximately chronological order.

Participants and Participation

The outcomes of this visioning effort (and the project that results) have the potential to impact all elementary schools across the district. As such, the visioning, planning, and programming efforts will cast a wide net for participants and participation. Dore + Whittier hopes to gather a group of thirty to forty participants that represent the entire Wilmington community.

- Students
- Parents
- Faculty (representatives of all disciplines and specialties)
- Staff
- Building Administrators
- District Administrators
- Members of the School Committee
- Members of the Select Board
- Members of the Finance Committee
- Members of the School Building Committee
- Senior Citizens

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- Citizens in the local business community
- Members of Parks and Recreation

These participants can be curated as an invited list or as an open call. The District should not feel pressure to stay within the limit of forty participants, but participants should be prepared to commit to participating in at least the four visioning sessions.

Time Commitment and Participation Platforms

More detailed information is provided below based on the specifics of each planning, programming, and visioning event. In broad terms, Dore + Whittier believes it is important to meet participants where they are and to make it as convenient to participate as possible. Dore + Whittier plans to conduct in-person, hybrid (synchronous), hybrid (asynchronous), and entirely remote events.

Principals' Interviews and Educational Walk-thru

Fall 2023

Participants

- Building Principal

Estimated Time Commitment

- 90 minutes

Event Format

- In-Person

The primary goal of these interviews is for D+W to better understand what's currently occurring in the schools under consideration. We hope to discuss:

- Current Programs and Services
- Existing Room Uses and Utilization
- The District's MSBA Educational Profile Questionnaire
- Each school's responses to D+W's operational questionnaire
- What's working well and what could work better both educationally and spatially
- Educational Aspirations for the student population under consideration

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- Principal opinions on ideal grade configurations, school size, and school location

Visioning #1 – District-wide Planning

Fall 2023

Participants

- Students
- Parents
- Faculty (representatives of all disciplines and specialties)
- Staff
- Building Administrators
- District Administrators
- Members of the School Committee
- Members of the Select Board
- Members of the Finance Committee
- Members of the School Building Committee
- Senior Citizens
- Citizens in the local business community
- Members of Parks and Recreation Department

Estimated Time Commitment

- 4 Hours

Event Format

- Hybrid (Synchronous) w/ AM and PM Sessions

The primary goal of this first workshop is to explore district-wide planning issues: Building and District Capacity, Grade Configuration, School Size, School Count, and School Location. It is meant to identify community preferences and set expectations for what an MSBA project can and cannot accomplish from a district-wide perspective.

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Norms (Whole Group) – 15 Min

2. Overview of Feasibility and Visioning Process (Whole Group) – 15 Min

This opening session communicate the overall visioning process, particularly as it relates to how when we will engage different stakeholders to help shape the project. This segment will also

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communicate that the series of activities over the next four workshops are meant to define a vision by:

- Gathering community input into District-wide planning issues
- Articulating responses to global prompts about learning
- Describing what learning and teaching should look like in Wilmington
- Identifying which design patterns best support the responses from previous prompts
- Creating a series of diagrams that communicate the idealized building and site organization
- Defining a set of guiding principles for design

3. District-wide Issues to be Addressed (Whole Group) – 15 Min

This short presentation will communicate:

- There is a capacity imbalance across the District
- There are six elementary schools with facilities needs and deficiencies
- There are educational challenges associated with the number of transitions between buildings.
- There are educational and operational challenges associated with the number and size of the elementary schools.

The presentation will conclude by communicating what tools and constraints exist to address these issues:

- Changes to the grade configuration(s)
- Changes to the number of elementary schools
- Changes to the size of the elementary schools
- Scope limitations of the MSBA project
- Financial practicalities

4. Q&A about the District-wide Issues (Whole Group) – 15 Min

5. Break – 5 Min

6. Grade Configuration Discussion (Small Group) – 30 Min

In table-top groups and digital break out rooms, participants will discuss and document the advantages and disadvantages of each of the grade configurations under consideration. Likely to be:

- PreK-K, 1st-3rd, 4th-5th, 6th-8th, 9th-12th

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- PreK-3rd, 4th-5th, 6th-8th, 9th-12th
- PreK-4th, 5th-7th, 8th-12th
- PreK-5th, 6th-8th, 9th-12th
- Other

7. Grade Configuration Preferences (Individuals) – 45 Min

This exercise will begin with a brief reporting out by each of the groups. The exercise will then take the temperature of the participants by inviting them to identify their preferred grade configuration from two perspectives:

- Purely educational
- With consideration of all factors: Education, total time to completion, finances, parity, etc.

8. Break – 5 Min**9. School Count and School Size (Small Groups) – 30 Min**

This activity will begin with a short presentation on what the possible school sizes and school counts could be. In small groups, participants will discuss and document the advantages and disadvantages of each combination.

10. School Size and School Count Preferences (Individuals) – 45 Min

This exercise will begin with a brief reporting out by each of the groups. The exercise will then take the temperature of the participants by inviting them to identify their preferred combination of school size and school counts using the same lenses as the grade configuration exercise.

- Purely educational
- With consideration of all factors: Education, total time to completion, finances, parity, etc.

11. Key Takeaways – 15 Min

This final exercise of the first day will summarize the key findings and preferences of those in attendance. This segment will also include next steps and a reminder of the upcoming schedule.

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Visioning #2 – Educational Delivery

Fall 2023

Participants

- Students
- Parents
- Faculty (representatives of all disciplines and specialties)
- Staff
- Building Administrators
- District Administrators
- Members of the School Committee
- Members of the Select Board
- Members of the Finance Committee
- Members of the School Building Committee
- Senior Citizens
- Citizens in the local business community
- Members of Parks and Recreation Department

Estimated Time Commitment

- 3 Hours

Event Format

- Hybrid (Synchronous) w/ AM and PM Sessions

The primary goal of this workshop is to explore what education may look like in the next 10-20 years. We will communicate trends in next generation learning and facilities from across the country and discuss ideas, practices, and facility characteristics that may be appropriate in Wilmington. This workshop is intended to raise more questions than answers.

12. Welcome, Introductions, and Norms (Whole Group) – 10 Min

13. Overview of Feasibility and Visioning Process & Review of Outcomes from Visioning Session #1 (Whole Group) – 15 Min

This opening session reviews the overall visioning process and summarizes the key takeaways from visioning session #1.

DRAFT**14. Setting the Stage (Individuals) – 60 minutes**

This exercise will invite participants to discuss several prompts about learning meant to uncover what participants believe.

- What does it mean to be educated?
- Why do we educate?
- How do we view students?
- How do we view educators?
- What are the greatest strengths of students?
- What are the greatest needs of students?
- What are the greatest strengths of educators?
- What are the greatest needs of educators?
- What systemic structures are the greatest impediments to accommodating students' and educators' needs? (State regulation / policy, daily school schedules, contractual requirements, etc.)
- What outside influences must be considered in the future of education?

15. Break – 5 minutes**16. The Learning Experience (Individuals) – 45 minutes**

This exercise will pose the prompt “What Does Learning Look Like?” It is a prompt meant to uncover the nature of learning activities and the potential space types to support that vision of learning. Participants will be asked as individuals to evaluate the 71 design patterns.

17. The Learning Experience Summary (Whole Group) – 15 min

As a whole group, we'll look at the results of the learning experience exercise and synthesize which experiences appear to be the most important for the project.

18. Key Take-aways and Next Steps (Whole Group) – 15 min

At the end of the workshop we will ask participants to identify the big picture take-aways from the day and summarize key concerns, realizations, and questions.

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Visioning #3 – Overall Site and Building Organization

Fall 2023

Participants

- Students
- Parents
- Faculty (representatives of all disciplines and specialties)
- Staff
- Building Administrators
- District Administrators
- Members of the School Committee
- Members of the Select Board
- Members of the Finance Committee
- Members of the School Building Committee
- Senior Citizens
- Citizens in the local business community
- Members of Parks and Recreation Department

Estimated Time Commitment

- 2 Hours

Event Format

In-Person and Remote (Asynchronous)

The primary goal of this second workshop is to explore the key decisions necessary to define the project: Overarching Guiding Principles for Design, Overall Site and Building Organization, and individual space patterns.

It will be preferred that everyone attend in person as we will be conducting design activities using physical tools and materials. However, for those that can not attend in person, Dore + Whittier will make digital versions of the materials and provide a link to those files so that participants can print, cut, manipulate, and photograph their work remotely.

1. Overview & Summary of Visioning Session #1 (Whole Group) – 15 min

This discussion will review the big picture take-aways from visioning session #2 and invite additional insight from participants that may have come to light

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since visioning session #2. It will also communicate the plan for the third workshop including the expected work product.

2. School Exemplar Presentation (Whole Group) – 45 min

D+W will give a presentation of examples from other projects that communicate what could be. Examples will include projects of similar size and various organizational models under consideration. Tools and resources from these example projects will be available and will inform the other activities planned for the day.

3. Break – 5 minutes

4. Functional Relationships Diagramming (Small Group & Individual) – 45 min

The Functional Relationship Diagramming exercise and the Design Guidelines exercise to follow are meant to be the culmination of the first two days of visioning. In the functional relationship diagramming exercise, each small group will produce an overall diagram of the project. D+W will provide personnel to help create the illustrations if necessary. Each diagram will be presented to the large group and comparisons drawn between them to serve as basic planning principles.

5. Design Guidelines (Whole Group) – 30 min

In this exercise, participants will document an overarching set of Guiding Principles for Design. It is meant to serve as a touchstone tool for the Design Team when translating the educational vision into building concepts.

6. Key Take-aways and Next Steps – 10 min

Visioning #4 – Spatial Concepts

Fall 2023

Participants

- Students
- Parents
- Faculty (representatives of all disciplines and specialties)
- Staff
- Building Administrators
- District Administrators
- Members of the School Committee

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- Members of the Select Board
- Members of the Finance Committee
- Members of the School Building Committee
- Senior Citizens
- Citizens in the local business community
- Members of Parks and Recreation Department

Estimated Time Commitment

- 2 ½ Hours

Event Format

In-Person and Remote (Asynchronous)

The primary goal of this final workshop is to explore concepts for translating the educational vision into individual or groups of spaces with specific features. D+W will provide a presentation of examples from other projects of the key spaces identified in visioning session #2 before participants break into small groups to develop concepts for each space.

It will be preferred that everyone attend in person as we will be conducting design activities using physical tools and materials. However, for those that can not attend in person, Dore + Whittier will make digital versions of the materials and provide a link to those files so that participants can print, cut, manipulate, and photograph their work remotely.

1. Overview & Summary of Visioning Sessions #1, #2, #3 – 10 min

2. Key Spaces Presentation (Whole Group) – 30 min

D+W will give a short presentation of examples from other projects of the key spaces that were identified in visioning session #3. These examples will serve as resources for the Key Spaces exercise that follows.

3. Key Spaces Exercise (Small Groups) – 60 min

In small groups, participants will create conceptual illustrations for single spaces or for a suite of spaces using the precedent images from D+W's presentation and the design patterns tools. Typically groups are formed around departmental or topical interest:

- Core Academic (Classrooms and other learning environments)

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- Special Education
- Art & Music
- Media Center
- Health & Physical Education
- Dining & Food Service
- Administration/Guidance/Medical
- Custodial/Maintenance
- Main Entry
- Outdoor Features and Amenities
- Sustainability

These illustrations are meant to be at a higher level of detail than the overall building diagrams created in visioning session #3. They will serve to inform how large spaces need to be and what key features need to be present.

4. Reporting Out Gallery Walk (Individuals) – 30 min

All illustrations created will be hung and a member of each small group will be given an opportunity to share their thought process with the rest of the participants.

5. Key Take-aways and Next Steps – 10 min

Preparation of Space Summaries (Working Group meetings)

The Space Summary Template is the tool that documents every space expected to be in the project. It is one of the two foundational documents that define MSBA projects. D+W will synthesize all of the information gleaned from the visioning sessions and make an initial pass at preparing the several required space summaries (one for each agreed upon design enrollment). It will be necessary, however, to convene Working Group meetings to review and edit those space summaries to fine tune them to the District's expected staffing and project realities. Typically, it takes at least two, two-hour meetings to work through every line item in the each space summary.

Preparation of Educational Program Narrative

This is the other foundational document that will define this MSBA project. It is a narrative written largely by the District to communicate its educational approach and justify any spatial deviations from MSBA guidelines. There is a specific

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outline and set of expectations identified by the MSBA. It would be best if the District begins the process of collecting the necessary data for this document at the outset of the feasibility study, but many portions will be informed by the outcomes of the visioning sessions.