

# The new Eudora elementary school

# Philosophy and Vision

## Personal

The school will be, above all other things, a personal learning environment.

- There will be a meaningful separation between the classrooms for younger and older students. Grades one through three will meet in one area, while grades four and five will meet in another.
- It will include small learning communities that lend themselves to individualized instruction and flexible learning groups.
- With time-proven programs like guided reading and guided math, it will enable students to learn at their own individual level, regardless of the subject and regardless of their grade level, but without the stigma of being permanently grouped according to ability.

## Designed for Learning

The school will create an environment where learning is the natural result.

- Learning time will be preserved by minimizing or eliminating the need for students to travel to other parts of the building for technology and other special activities. The youngest students will have the least amount of travel time to the areas they frequent, and codes throughout the building will help students find the way to their destinations quickly.
- Teacher learning – in the form of daily collaboration with colleagues and professional development activities – will be supported with dedicated spaces for these meetings that are close to the teachers' classrooms.
- Technology will be integrated into the learning environment, rather than housed in a lab that becomes a destination. The use of laptop carts, technology-integrated classrooms and teacher tools will support this.
- The use of specialized building and interior materials will minimize the distraction that maintenance procedures can create, protecting the integrity of the learning environment. This includes the use of rubber and carpet tile floorings, rather than UCT tiles. Non-painted block will be used on the streets and, when possible, in Discovery Centers, to minimize the need for painting and maintenance that disrupts the learning environment.
- Students' ability to hear their teachers will be a key factor in the design. The equipment used will minimize white noise and improve the hearing environment for students. Mechanicals, such as air vents, will be selected and placed so that they have minimum impact on the learning environment, and amplification systems – both architectural and technological – will be used to help students hear (and therefore learn) better.

## Flexible

The school will afford students and teachers the maximum amount of flexibility for learning and for special activities.

- The design will facilitate the opportunity for teachers to loop between grade levels. This includes using a name for each neighborhood, rather than a grade level assignment.
- A Discovery Center would be open to students before school, staffed by paras and/or advanced college students.
- The environment will promote a self-guided, hands-on approach to learning, including the use of laptop computers, activity centers with manipulatives and reading areas.
- The Discovery Center will have a theme that reflects the important curricular objectives at any given time.
- Research and expert advice, possibly including input from university students, will be used in the design of the Discovery Centers, in order to accomplish these objectives.

## Healthy & safe

The school will be a “healthy” building to be in, a place where bodies and minds can be open to learning.

- The intentional use of natural lighting and dedication to air quality will provide a critical boost to the mental and physical health of students and teachers. These things, along with supervised hand-washing stations and effective indoor lighting, all will contribute to the long-term cleanliness and overall health of students, of teachers, and of the facility.
- Safety and security will be addressed in such a way that students' learning is not threatened by worry or fear. Visual supervision, security cameras and key card access and will enhance student and teacher safety and discourage potential threats.
- Limited exterior entries, and just one entry onto each “street” of the school, all of which can be locked in case of emergency, will severely restrict the flow of unauthorized individuals in and out of the school and classrooms.
- Outdoor play areas will be fenced, and rubber tiled flooring under playground equipment will reduce student injuries.