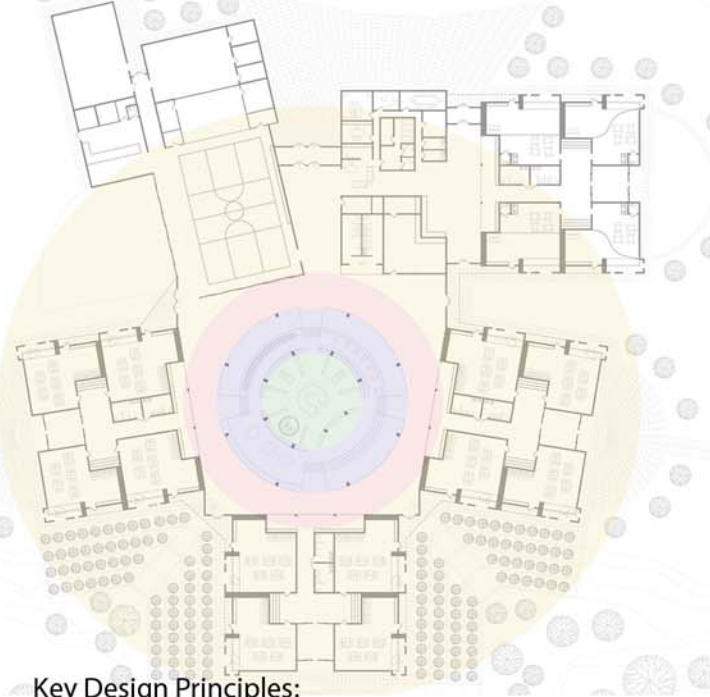


# Designing Schools that Promote Positive Development

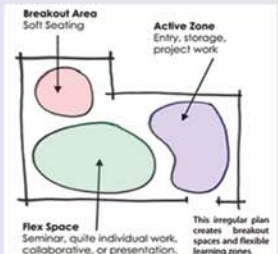
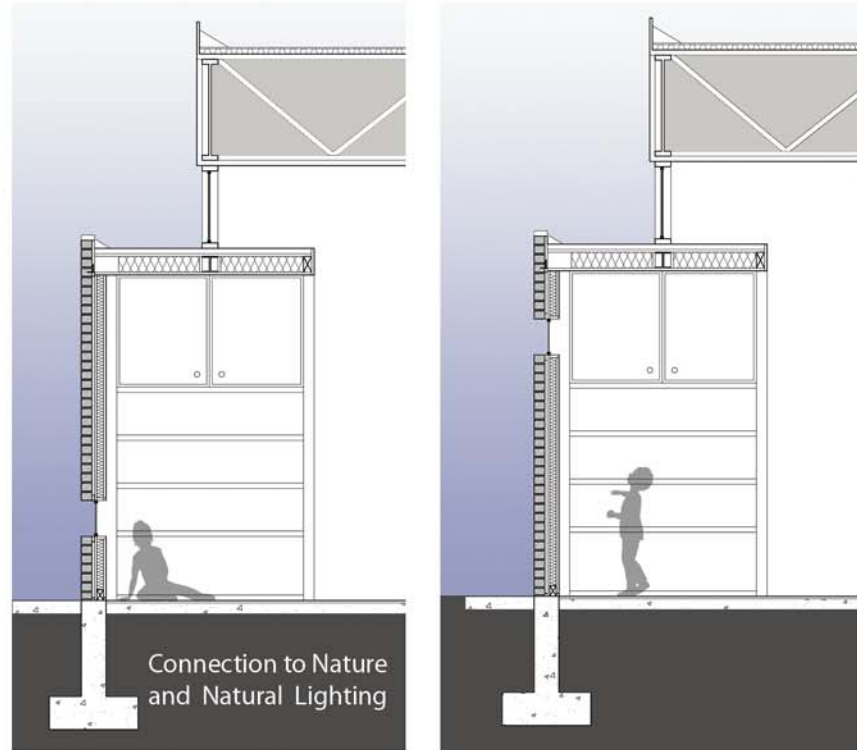
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research abstract  
5.15.07



## Key Design Principles:

- **Classroom pods**  
The compactness of the pod allows children to connect to their surroundings and creates the feel of a smaller school, which is less intimidating.
- **Concentric circles**  
By avoiding linear plans, students do not have to travel long distances to reach other parts of the school.
- **Pockets of activity**  
This design also avoids the noise complications of open air classrooms while still maintaining a connection between the rooms.
- **Shared spaces**  
These spaces are convenient for large and small group activities.
- **Connection to nature**  
By bringing the planting up to the building and extending the outdoor classrooms into the wetlands, students get to experience science and nature activities in a hands-on manner.
- **Visual connections**  
The flexibility of the school allows for a flow between indoor and outdoor activities, through the operable glass walls of the gymnasium and resource rooms. Additionally, the line of sight from the center of the library area through the pods creates a visual connection through the school and emphasizes the connection to the outdoors.
- **Storage and Display space**  
Allowing room for student and teacher storage space decreases the student stress level.
- **Natural Lighting**  
The variety of lighting implemented throughout the school is beneficial for students with different learning styles.

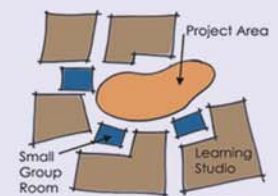
Throughout the course of the year, I have researched elementary schools. I chose to explore the relationship between the built environment and the educational process. More specifically, I explored issues of lighting, air quality, noise, community, interactive play, spatial quality, materials, sustainable systems and siting. I then chose to research how each particular topic affected the health, learning and behavior of elementary school students. Through my research, I drew connections between design strategies and positive development among students. I wanted to take a holistic approach to the design in order to create an environment that promoted health, learning and good behavior.



The ability of a room to be well defined encourages more exploratory behavior and improved social interactions.

By clustering classrooms, large schools feel smaller. This offers greater opportunity for involvement, increased test scores and lower student stress levels.

The L-shaped classroom accommodates the needs of small groups and is flexible enough to be organized in a variety of ways.



## Pod Organization

- **Display Space and Pod Entry**  
This area contains a long bench and display wall where student artwork can be displayed. Additionally, the entrance ways would be painted different colors to help differentiate between grade levels. This allows students to identify with their surroundings and aids younger children in the development of way finding and association skills.
- **Teacher Pods and Storage Areas**  
Students and teachers should have adequate space to store their belongings, thus reducing stress and aggressive behavior.
- **Breakout Activity Space**  
This area is meant to provide students room for small group meetings, reading and project space. Partitioning of space encourages verbal interactions as well as associative, cooperative and fantasy play.
- **Shared Space**  
This room is meant for group meeting, both large and small. It can also be used for lectures, show and tell, plays or any number of group activities.
- **Additional Breakout Space**  
This area provides stadium seating on either side of the pod. This space can be used for lectures, show and tell, plays or any number of group activities.