

StoneEdge Junior High School

Intro:

Stone-Edge Junior High is the school of the future, where self-motivated students can work with like-minded peers to gain an understanding of life and the world around us. The school is built to be immersed in nature, bordering the Willamette River, as well as being situated within a forest. Our school is committed to using green energy. Our curriculum is based on student needs, being fully adaptable to every student's abilities and challenges. We work to help immerse students in their learning to realize the real world applications.

Planning:

When brainstorming what we wanted in our school, our focus was to make this school fit the needs of students and teachers through our S.M.A.R.T Architecture (Scientific, Multipurpose, Artfully Designed, Responsive, and Thoughtful). We created the S.M.A.R.T model as a way to connect our paramount ideas throughout the architecture and curriculum as we designed. As well, we conducted multiple surveys and sent them out to teachers and students in our school. This data informed our decisions and allowed us to see some of the bigger issues within our current school.

One of the complaints we often hear from our peers is, "What we learn in school doesn't relate in any way to real-life." **Our firm wanted the student of the future to know how it relates and why it matters.** We brainstormed and decided to implement a combination of both immersion elements and real world examples through the architecture and curriculum. Some of the ideas that came out of this were models of topics they'll learn in Social Studies and access to the nature they study in Science. With these key ideas, our school started to take form.

The Curriculum:

The motto for StoneEdge's curriculum is: "We will educate the whole student by connecting the learning to their future." The Social Studies classrooms are representative of the architecture of the time periods they will learn about. From Ancient India to the Renaissance, there's a classroom built to experience it. The immersion doesn't end with the architecture, students will experience food, music, and other items from the focus topics on "Cultural Days".

Next we created a learning structure that works with many different learning styles. Since all students are different, why have a singular structure for everyone? Our classes showcase a variety of different types of learning, with lots of options, from self studies to projects, to allow for students to choose how they learn and learn in the way that's best for them. A typical day in our school is structured with time allowed for student interests and social times, because socialization is an important factor in the development of middle schoolers. Between classes, there will be long passing periods and breaks, good times for students to meet with teachers or hang out with friends.

Sustaining the Energy we use:

Schools use a lot of power. From the lights to the heating and air conditioning, it all adds up. To make this school as green as possible, we've taken advantage of every free roof for solar panels or green roofs. The solar panels will generate electricity, while the grass and plants can help create more sustainable food and insulation.

How the community benefits:

Our school is located in a beautiful area, so the Portland community should be able to experience it as well. Parts of the campus itself will be open for

the community to explore. The buildings will be open after school and on week-ends for community use. Extra food from our green roof gardens will be donated to food banks around the community. In the future, once the school has served its purpose and is done being used for education, it can be easily converted into affordable housing.

The Physical Environment:

“Painting ceilings blue will make kids more creative,” brain research has stated, which is why we decided to show kids the sky, instead of painting. Our school has a large amount of windows and glass ceilings to help students feel calmer, as well as to just make it feel like you’re out in nature. The indoor environment has many trees, plants and aquaponics to help with connection to nature. The students get the positive emotional and focus effects nature provides, while still being indoors.

We’ve designed a traffic pattern based on one of the biggest imperfections of our current school, cars and buses are forced to use one lane in and out of the school, causing major traffic backup. With multiple lanes for different purposes, our school will minimize the traffic headaches.

SUMMARY:

Our school, its systems of better education, and the S.M.A.R.T. architecture that supports it, are what will most benefit the students of the future. The immersion into what students are learning will allow them to retain it better. Our green energy focus can pave pathways to total green energy worldwide, and our community-based gardens and partnerships will make strong bonds with the community and businesses.