

Essays

There are many styles of classrooms and different ways to learn throughout the world. Our group focused on designing a school where everyone is accepted and handicap accessible. Our school is environmentally friendly and uses various elements of green technology. The focus of the design is a fifth-grade classroom based on Fantasy and Mythology. Hermes Academy is based on our group's collective ideas, and we aimed to foster a scene of being surrounded by nature and a relaxing atmosphere in which to inspire a young mind.

Hermes Academy is a K-12 school where children can spend their entire undergraduate school career. Our school welcomes all children no matter what they may have or lack. Students with disabilities are not excluded from school because they need more help. It allows them to learn alongside their peers. We want to encourage kids to learn and have fun while doing so. Being immersed in nature's environment, especially within the science classroom, allows them to connect with their world .

Hermes Academy teaches children by using hands-on activities that can make a child interested in the topic. During classes, teachers will give options to the class on what subject they may want to start with because the same routine each day may make a student disinterested. Once a subject is decided, the class would then get split into two groups that are determined by who is talented in the subject and who needs a bit more help. After receiving their assignment, the students would work on it with their group at their desks. If a child needed help, the teacher would work with them until they got it. School would be Monday to Friday from 8 AM to 2:30 PM. Our school hours start a bit earlier so students can go home early in the afternoon so that they are not stressed if they have activities in the evening and still manage to do their homework to their best ability. Our school would have Summer, Winter, February, Spring and holiday breaks. The Hermes Academy environment strives to include everyone and become a safe space for students. If a student feels safe in their school, they will manage to relax and enjoy themselves. If a student enjoys themselves, they will become motivated to learn in class.

Our school offers many educational opportunities including that of a class pet. Whether it be a hamster, snake, or fish, class pets provide students the chance to learn about what living

things need to survive, which will help when a child leaves the care of their parents. Our school also offers a wide variety of classes and clubs. Rather than only offering one language, our school offers Spanish, French, and Mandarin, so that kids can choose what they would be interested in. Clubs can be formed if there are enough students interested every year, so any school-appropriate club is possible every year. There are also opportunities that allow a student to learn how to depend on themselves. We allow students above grade five to start boarding on a campus attached to the school.

Hermes Academy is also present in the community. After school hours, we offer special education classes for adults. The program would group adults based on how much they already know compared to their peers, taught by volunteers from Hermes Academy. On the weekends, local clubs can host their meetings in rooms throughout the school. We also allow local sports teams to practice and host games at the school if we have the necessary items.

The school also has a few eco-friendly technologies in use. Our school is powered by solar panels. The solar panels would face the south and be slightly tilted up because Hermes Academy would be in the countryside of Sturbridge, Massachusetts. Our school strives to be eco-friendly and to not leave a physical mark on the Earth. We also use well water that is filtered and treated for the school's personal use. As a way to recycle food scraps in a resourceful way to take care of our school gardens, we use compost.

The school also provides many handicapped accessible items such as furniture and technology to be present for all, as many students learn through various points of technology. We want to be adaptable to whoever may attend our school. All classes are equipped with wide desks or tables to fit a wheelchair under. If there are any stairs, we always add an elevator to the same building. We also have a few teachers on our staff that are fluent in ASL, allowing communication between staff and students or families who are deaf. We also have teachers who are fluent in French, Spanish, and Mandarin to communicate with students who many do not know English yet. Hermes Academy focuses on students with attention issues, so teachers are prepared to help. We also allow students to take breaks if they feel overstimulated in a situation, breaks can range from sitting in the reading corner furnished with mushroom seats, so students take a few breaths or taking a walk to the counselor to help with their feelings.

Finally, The Weeping Willow's group evolution. Our group has evolved a lot throughout this project. We have maintained a friendly and positive experience for the few months we have worked on Schools NEXT. A major way we have evolved is by becoming closer friends with each other. There may have been a few bumps in the road, but they never broke our group

apart and we couldn't work together anymore. We are all grateful for our group members' personalities that make it easy to get along with.