

# Evergreen School of Growth

## Narrative

Welcome to Evergreen School of Growth (ESG), which also stands for Environment, Socialization and Growth mindset, (ESG). Our school's mission is founded on a single goal, to improve the strength of character and life skills of students through their connection with nature. Our vision is for students to become responsible and sensitive world citizens that will enjoy and preserve ecological harmony through an innovative and technologically enhanced environment.

### Curriculum

Our curriculum is based on the experiences of students and how it brings them closer to nature. We focus on how this connection with nature inspires the character traits: Responsibility, Self Advocacy, Independence, Empathy, and Compassion.

### Planning

When planning our school, instead of listing what buildings would be in our school, we first started by brainstorming character traits we wanted our students to have. We then designed the school and buildings around those traits. Our first school design put all of the trait inspired features into one big space, but we quickly realized some major flaws. For starters, the school was 4 kilometers in length. Through trial and error, we finally arrived at a much more manageable size of 1,200 meters, including extension space. We achieved this by using a more compact design with the mountain on one side, and the buildings in a concentric circle pattern on the other side to balance the design. All of these changes and improvements would not have been possible if it weren't for the feedback of our community and our licenced

architect. One way we got advice was through a staff and faculty survey. We surveyed 30 teachers/administration, and 2 custodians, getting their insight on what a good school would look like. They gave us ideas on what traits we could inspire and what design features of our current school that are not desirable, making sure we didn't go down the same path. When planning, we came up with the idea to make the school a prototype so it could be customized for the needs of the students and community.

## Buildings

All the buildings in ESG are designed to encourage the use of flexible space, collaboration, adjacent thinking, and connections to nature. All the buildings reflect these ideas in different ways, from nature inspired roofs, to lessons based on the beauty of nature to mimicking natural design in the variable collaborative spaces.

## Outside Classroom

Surrounding our two central science and dorm buildings, is a forest. Here students are able to learn about the environment, not by looking at pictures and paragraphs in a book, but by actually spending time in the woods. This is one of the steps we took to ensure that at ESG, every day is an outdoor day. Here students are taught botany lessons and are able to see and experience the complex ecosystem that are created naturally.

## Garden of Growth

In one of the concentric circles is a garden tended by the students. The garden will teach students responsibility and empathy-taking care of plants will be hard, and plants need to be loved and cared for. All food grown in the garden will be used in the kitchen for student and staff meals which are made from scratch. All the food

we cannot grow, is ethically sourced from local independent farmers. The Students are also involved in the food preparation.

## Community

Our goal is not just to be another building in the community, but to become an integral part of that community. The first way we can achieve this is by becoming the main power source for our community, giving them excess power created by our solar panels. Another way we can foster this relationship is by letting students do some of the teaching. We're going to offer free technology courses taught by students for those who are not proficient in using current technologies.

Spaces such as the mountain and fields are available to local groups for activities. Astronomy and star-navigation for the community can be held in the observatory at the tip of the mountain, while search and rescue teams could utilize the realistic but controlled environment of the mountain's exterior.

In addition, our school is designed and prepared to meet the needs of the community in the event of a natural/man-made disaster through immediate occupancy guidelines.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, ESG is the school of the future because it focuses on the content of a student's character in addition to their academic skills and learning. We use the ideas of flexible space, collaboration and adjacent thinking to help us with this focus. We use a technologically enhanced environment to ensure the growth and prosperity of student's connections to nature. Our school is also the school of the future because we don't just take care of our students, but also our community by becoming an integral part of it through the many ways we vow to support it. Because of all these things, "ESG is the school of the future."