

*The Campus as Learning Landscape:
Exterior Environments as Pedagogical
Infrastructure for Project-Based Learning*

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*Think about the most meaningful
learning experience you had
before age 18.*



Was it sitting at a desk?!



Or was it somewhere else?

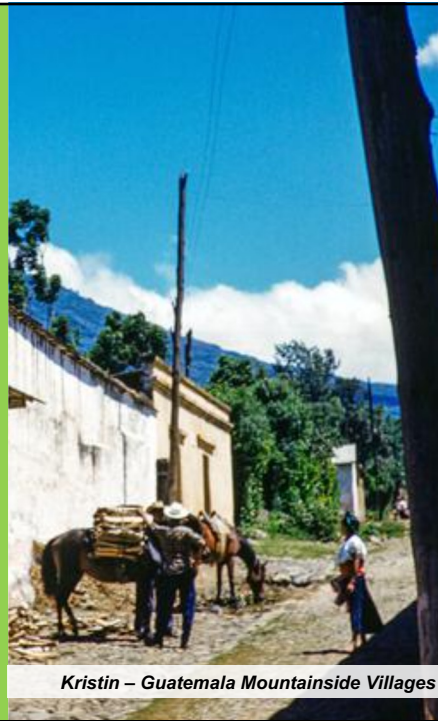


In one or two words, where did that meaningful learning experience take place?

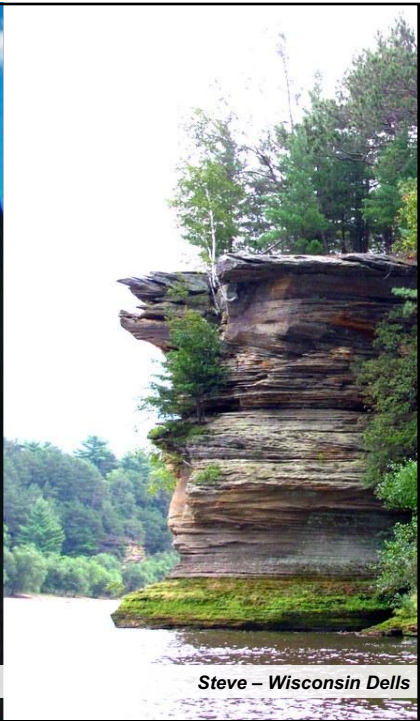
What if every campus provided for authentic and impactful experiences?



Todd – Georgia Woodlands



Kristin – Guatemala Mountainside Villages



Steve – Wisconsin Dells

Learning Objectives

Identify how **exterior campus environments** can function as **pedagogical infrastructure** that supports expeditionary learning, project-based learning, and project-based play across multiple age groups.

Explain how **landscape design strategies** such as visual hierarchy, tactile materials, planting systems, and ecological infrastructure **support sensory extension, orientation, and independence** for deaf and hard-of-hearing learners.

Evaluate how gardens, bioretention waterways, outdoor classrooms, athletic and play **exterior environments**, and adjacent parks can be integrated into **daily learning routines** to **promote health, safety, and student engagement**.

Apply lessons from diverse campus contexts to **plan exterior learning environments that strengthen community connection, family engagement, and long-term educational value** while meeting Health, Safety, and Welfare design goals.

What are you most looking forward to in this session?



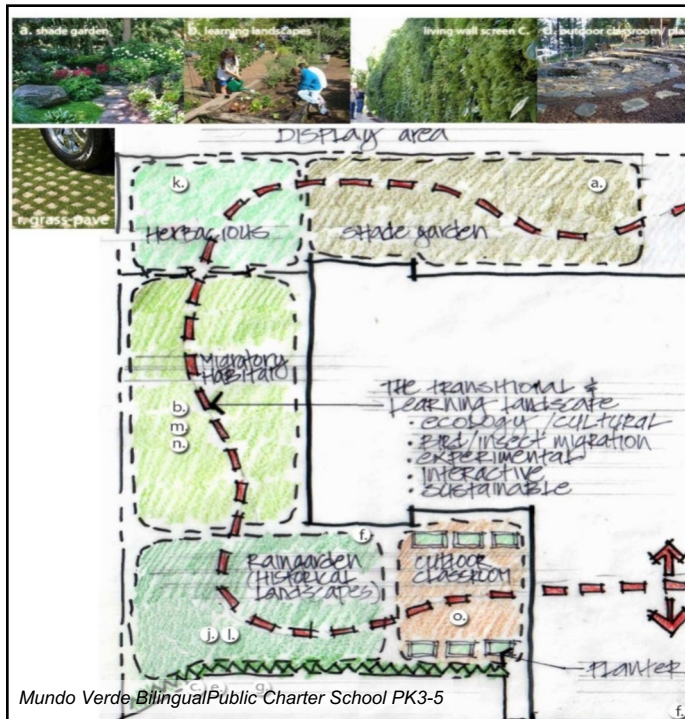


Traditional Learning



Project-based Learning

EL Education



In project- and placed-based learning, the campus exterior is essential to supporting

**Observation
Experimentation
Iteration
Shared meaning-making**

...becoming a Learning Landscape

student activism

sensory environment

outdoor collaboration

water systems

student design

Why this matters

Quick pair-share:

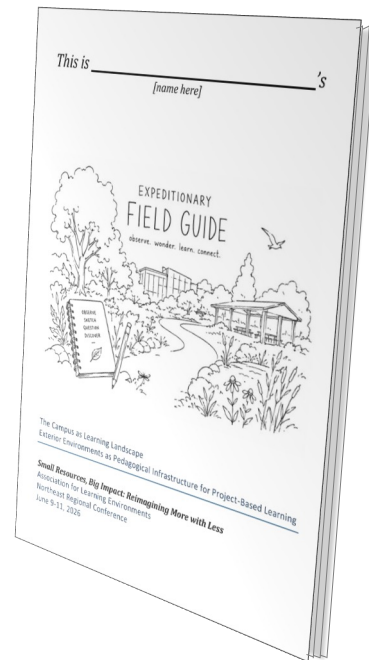
Where does learning already happen outside classrooms on your campuses?

Capital City Public Charter School PK-12

The Field Work

We're going on an Expedition!

- Observe
- Wonder
- Reflect
- Apply



Case Studies

Mundo Verde Public Charter School



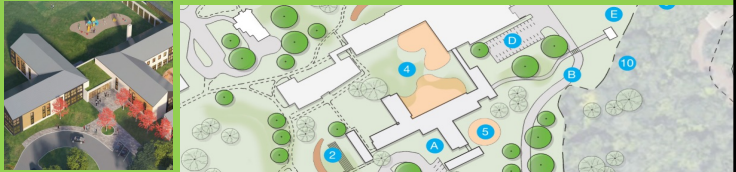
Capital City Public Charter School



Maryland School for the Deaf

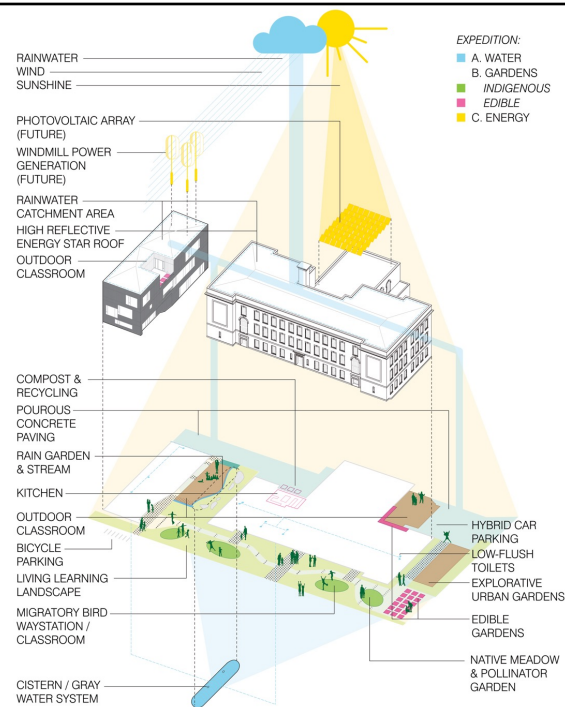


Michigan School for the Deaf



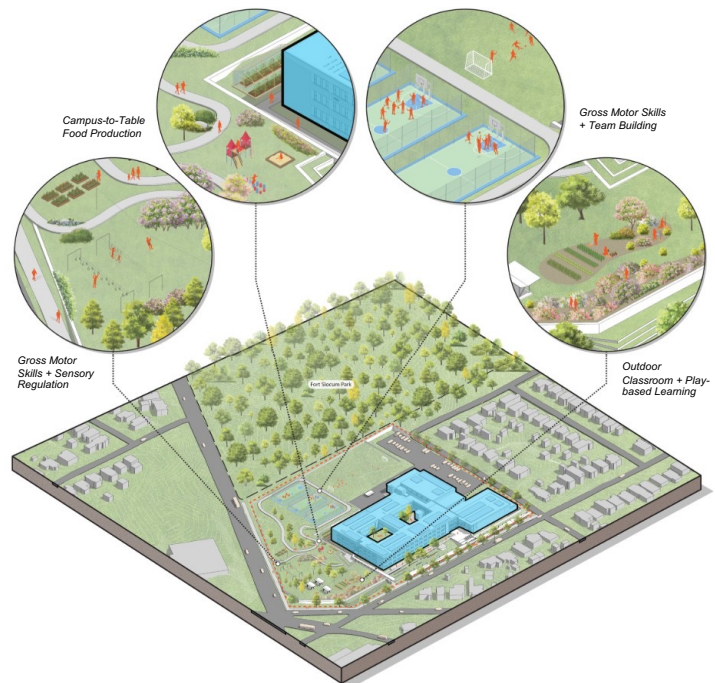
CASE STUDY: Mundo Verde Public Charter School

- PreK3 – 5th Grades
- Historic school campus
- Building Renovation +
- New Building
- Project-Based Play
- Nature Play and Outdoor Learning



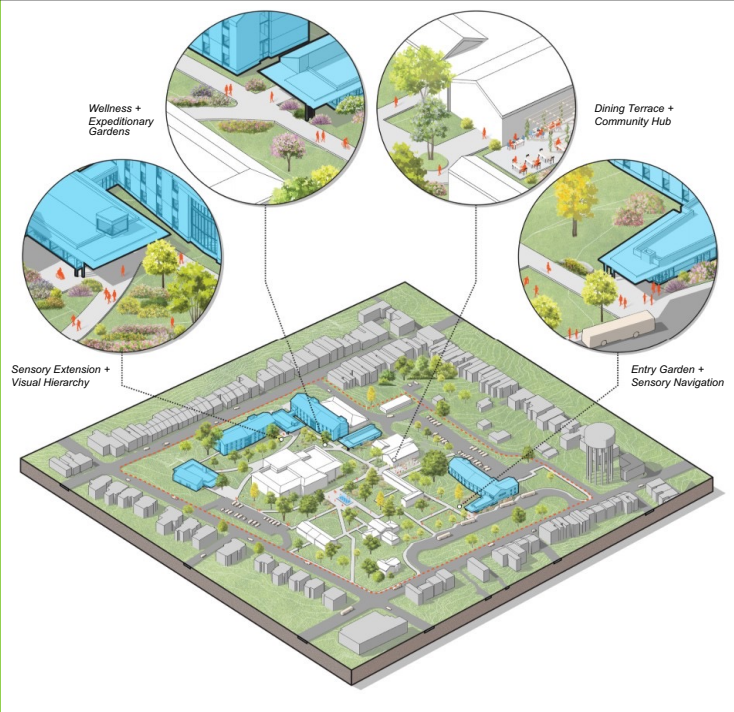
CASE STUDY: Capital City Public Charter School

- PreK3 – 12th Grades
- Systems Modernization
- Outdoor + Play-based Learning
- Athletics
- Outdoor Activities



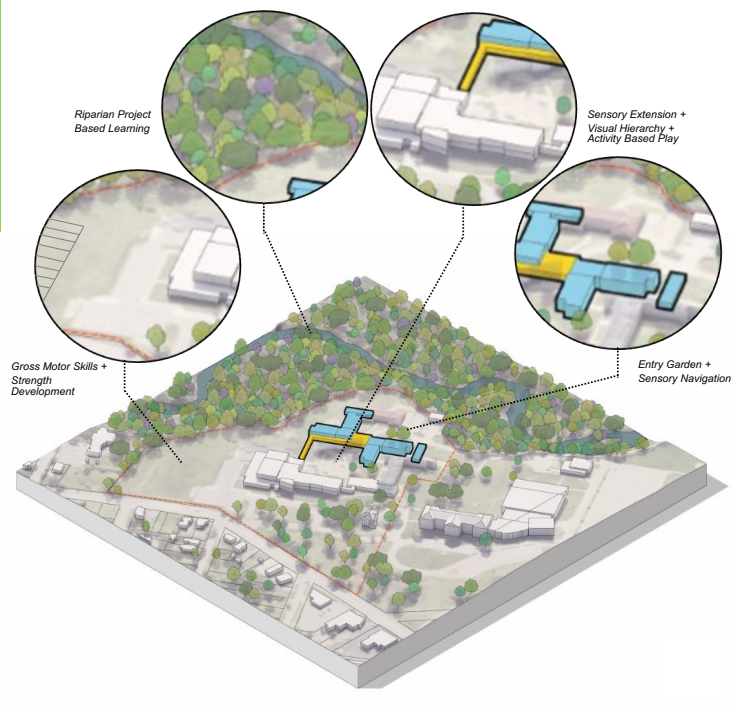
CASE STUDY: Maryland School for the Deaf

- 7th – 12th Grades
- Historic Campus + Community
- Residence Halls
- Student and Medical Center
- Four New Buildings
- Sensory Extension
- Sensory Navigation
- Visual Hierarchy
- DeafSpace Guidelines



CASE STUDY: Michigan School for the Deaf

- PreK3 – 12th Grades
- Mid-Century Campus
- Residence Halls
- Student and Medical Center
- Two New Buildings
- Sensory Extension
- Visual Hierarchy
- DeafSpace Guidelines
- Project-based Learning



Field Work: ROUND 1

Observe | 10 minutes



Explore Case Study Stations
(one or more!)



Identify sensory opportunities



Document observations in
field guide (page 2-3)



Field Work: ROUND 2

Wonder | 10 minutes



Explore 2-3 Case Studies



Look for evidence of:

- **Movement:** What shapes movement on these campuses?
- **Social Interaction / Community:** Where do collaboration and community occur?
- **Physical Environment / Ecological Systems:** How do the students engage the physical and ecological systems?
- **Time:** How do students experience and observe important aspects and units of time?



Document observations in field
guide (pages 3-4)



REFLECTION | Table Conversations

5 minutes

What are some of the common elements you observed across the projects?

What did you discover? What surprised you? What do you still wonder?

APPLICATION: Campus Diagnostic Audit



Outdoor Inquiry

Where does inquiry happen outdoors?



Public Visibility

Where is student work publicly visible?



Movement & Learning

Where does movement support learning?



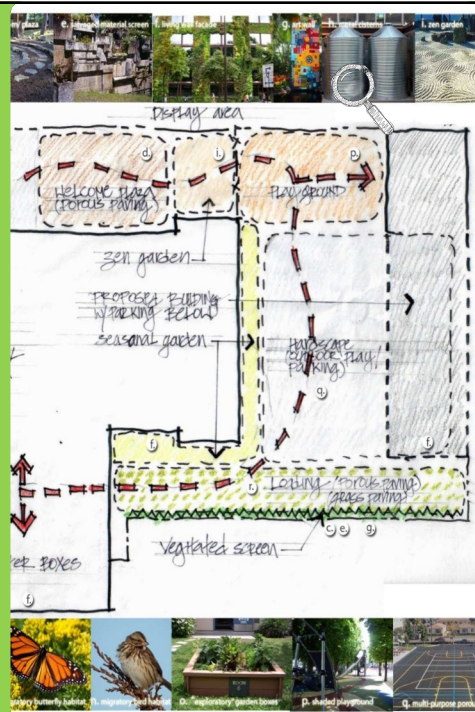
Direct Ecology

Where do students experience ecology directly?



Inclusion & Belonging

Where does the campus support belonging and sensory inclusion?



APPLICATION

What is one thing you could change or improve about your campus or a current project?

Spaces and landscapes where learning unfolds...



across environments

learning occurs in and across a diversity of physical, cultural, virtual and natural environments



across movement

learning happens through movement, journeys and transitions



across social interaction

learning is co-constructed through relationships, dialogue and shared experiences



across time

learning is iterative, building on past experiences and projecting into the future

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**Thank you for coming on this
expedition with us!**

***What would change if every path,
garden, commons, and threshold was
part of the curriculum?***