

Peter Kirk Elementary School

1312 6th Street
Kirkland, WA



Visions for a new Peter Kirk

Guided by the mission of the school and the goal of the district for “every student future ready” the new Peter Kirk encompasses a diverse mix of spaces, both active and quiet, for student and staff use. Providing students plenty of options for peace and calm in tucked-away nooks or separate work rooms was important for learning styles that require minimal distraction, focus, and introspective thought. For active learners who thrive in more high-energy arenas, group collaboration spaces were provided throughout the school to encourage interaction and teamwork.

Technology was a key component in the classrooms, as we move toward more technology-based learning every day. Each classroom includes interactive white boards and is wired to incorporate changing technologies as more advanced tools become available.

Supporting the school’s curriculum, the final configuration includes classroom pods organized by grade. Each pod contains five class spaces around a shared collaboration area, providing a dedicated space for each classroom to interact with one another within the pod. The use of sliding glass doors between the classrooms’ shared walls and to the collaboration space provides added flexibility for group teaching, inter-classroom and grade-level projects.

Peter Kirk’s exterior spaces provide additional outdoor learning areas. Accessible by exits at each pod, the outdoor spaces include seating options and level greenspace for outdoor teaching opportunities. Native, low impact plants were selected as not only a sustainable choice, but as a nod to the natural environment and history of the site, providing opportunities for teaching and drawing connections between the past and present.

A School for the Community

Kirkland is a community with active resident participation, as such, the community engagement portion of the project was integral to the early design process for the new Peter Kirk. To gather important data to inform the design of the new school, a representative group of District staff, teachers, administration, parents, students and community members were engaged. Through multiple workshops, it was apparent that the community had strong ties to the existing school and plenty of ideas for what should be included in the new facility. When describing the existing facility, recurring themes included active spaces, a collaborative spirit, and a student-centered ethos. These themes were incorporated into the design, helping to create something familiar with the new structure.

Peter Kirk Elementary School is located in a well-established residential community, tucked into a wooded site. Reinforcing the wooded character of the existing school’s setting which was important to community members and parents. Because of this, the existing vegetation was used to enhance the site, acting as a screen from the surrounding community and residences. The school is adjacent to the Cross Kirkland Corridor, and site design was meant to encourage exploration of the surrounding wooded area through connecting trails, while also providing another means of access for neighbors, parents, and students.

The school’s grass play field is situated at the west boundary of the site, between the two main drive entrances to the school. The significant open space is part of a joint partnership with the City of Kirkland, encouraging community use and interaction. The play field is accessible from both parking lots, providing ease of access for community events.

Physical Environment

Taking a cue from the site and the natural environment, the spaces within the school cultivate calmness and welcome. Windows throughout provide an abundance of natural light and views to the outdoors, while graphic representations of nature also included in interior common areas help to create a sense of being “in the trees”. The interior color palette uses warm natural materials with contrasting shades of blues and greens. Strategic pops of bright color add vibrancy to active spaces.

To reduce the environmental impact of the project, over 30 geothermal wells are used to efficiently generate heat and cool the building. On the roof, the building is ready for future installation of photovoltaic panels to produce solar power. Throughout the school, energy efficient fixtures and lighting were utilized, as well as the addition of ceiling fans for cooling in the warmer months.

To further minimize the footprint of the new school, materials were salvaged from an old house on the site that was removed prior to construction. Boards and beams from the house were transformed into the library desk area, with decorative paneling reaching the ceiling, linking the old with the new. The reclaimed wood was also utilized at the administration counter tops and hallway benches.

Results

The new Peter Kirk helps to achieve Lake Washington School District’s goals for “future ready” students, in a collaborative and hands-on learning environment. The diverse mix of spaces provides areas for different learning and teaching styles, ensuring students are able to feel comfortable and safe knowing there’s a place for them. Incorporating technology into all of the school’s learning areas assures the facility is “wired” for success, enabling students to use tech in everyday lessons and future-ready for evolving teaching philosophies.

Through enhancing the school site’s connection to the Cross Kirkland Corridor and the shared green space in partnership with the city of Kirkland, the community is able to interact with the new Peter Kirk in a way that is organic and unfettered. Community events are held on the school’s green space and it is not uncommon for neighborhood families to visit Peter Kirk to utilize the playfields, play structures, and covered basketball areas.

In light of COVID-19, the adaptable spaces were utilized to provide proper social distancing for students, in accordance with CDC guidelines. The collaboration spaces also provided students additional safety when returning to in-person learning.

While the inclusion of significant outdoor green space provided an opportunity outdoor learning, the school was able to broaden outdoor learning opportunities after occupying the school. With the expansive outdoor spaces, the Peter Kirk Parent-Teacher Association was able to install raised planters on the (south) side of the school, further expanding the outdoor curriculum.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

- ADMINISTRATION
- ART / SCIENCE / MUSIC
- CLASSROOMS / CORE INSTRUCTION
- CIRCULATION
- COMMONS
- GYM
- KITCHEN
- LIBRARY
- RESTROOMS
- SHARED LEARNING
- SPECIAL SERVICES
- TEACHER PREP
- UTILITY / STORAGE



Project Participants
 Owner: Lake Washington School District
 Architect: Studio Meng Strazzara
 Contractor: Lease Crutcher Lewis
 Civil Engineer: LPD Engineering
 Landscape Architect: Weisman Design Group
 Structural Engineer: Coughlin Porter Lundeen
 Mechanical/Electrical Engineer: BCE Engineers
 Food Service Design: JLR Group
 Acoustical Consultant: Stantec
 Owner’s Representative: OAC Services, Inc.

Project Information
 Grade Levels: K-5
 Site Area: 15 Acres
 Floor Area: 80,138 SF
 Opening Date: September 2019
 Cost / SF: \$462/SF
 Delivery Method: GC/CM

