

Lucia Mar Unified School District Prototype Multipurpose Rooms

The Transformation of Three Elementary Schools Through a Prototype Design



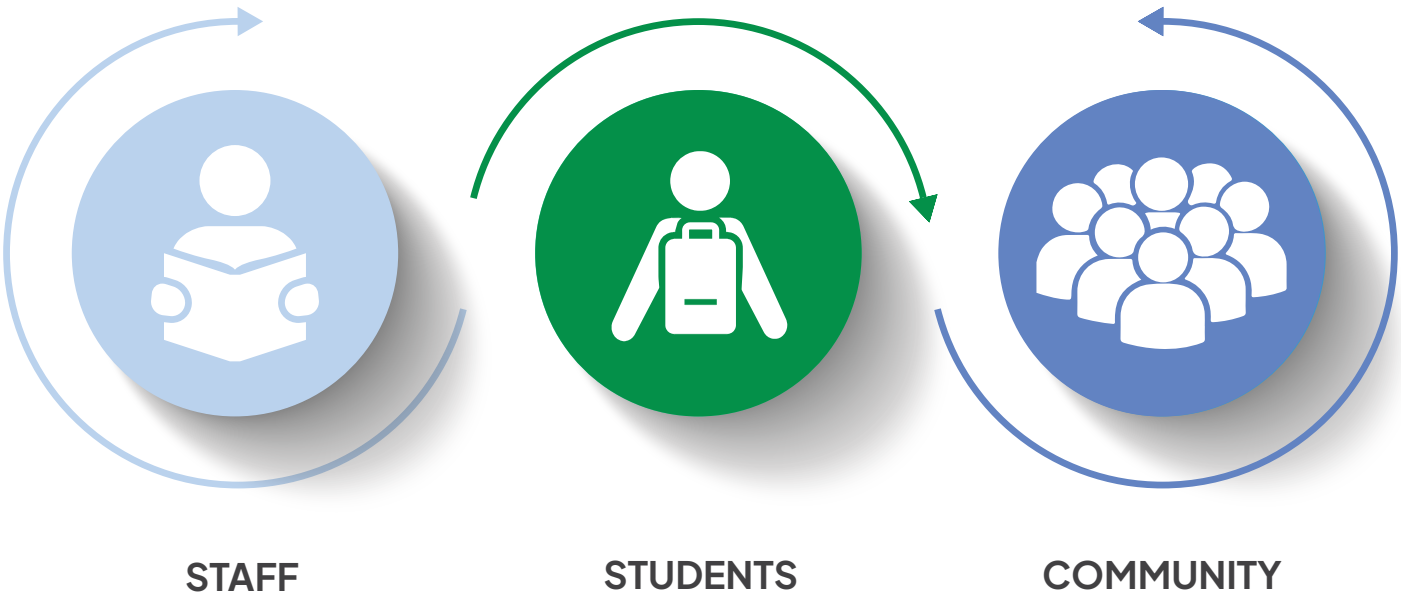
Executive Summary

With quality facilities, three schools are better able to support their staff, educate their students, and connect with the local community.

From outdated, cramped modular units to artfully designed signature buildings, this prototype multipurpose room placed strategically on three different campuses enables a medley of educational and community oriented activities. The Lucia Mar Unified School District has long felt limited, but are now proud of their new spaces which are truly *multipurpose*.

The goal of the school district was to equitably and effectively invest in campus facilities. This meant serving the most amount of students possible with a project that utilized public funds thoughtfully. Every facet of these multipurpose rooms was designed with students and faculty at the forefront to accommodate a wide array of uses. Through the replication of the same structural design, once the initial prototype was developed for the first school site only a few site adaptations were required at the subsequent sites, reducing both design and construction costs significantly. Every dollar saved meant that it could be reinvested into another needed project for the schools and students.

The multipurpose rooms (MPRs) offer a flexible and welcoming environment that caters to students and the broader community alike. Students are to engage in a wider variety of activities such as physical fitness, arts and crafts, and after-school programs that activate their minds holistically. When community events are held, the multipurpose



rooms serve as a vital link between the schools and their neighborhood, fostering a stronger sense of connection and shared experiences. These multipurpose rooms are more than just a significant facility improvement; they exemplify the district's commitment to maximizing the value of its investments while enhancing the well-being of its students and the communities they serve.



Scope of Work and Budget

Size + Costs:

Shell Beach Elementary: 4,959 SF / \$2,846,8159

Branch Elementary: 4,463 SF / \$3,478,331

Grover Heights Elementary: 4,463 SF / \$3,478,331

Scope:

- a performance art stage, tackable walls, acoustics, durable materials and timeless design
- responsible use of district funds
- an attractive space for the community

“It’s a fully functional, excellent building that is attractive on the outside and the inside.”

- Andy Stenson, Executive Director of Facilities, Maintenance, + Operations



1

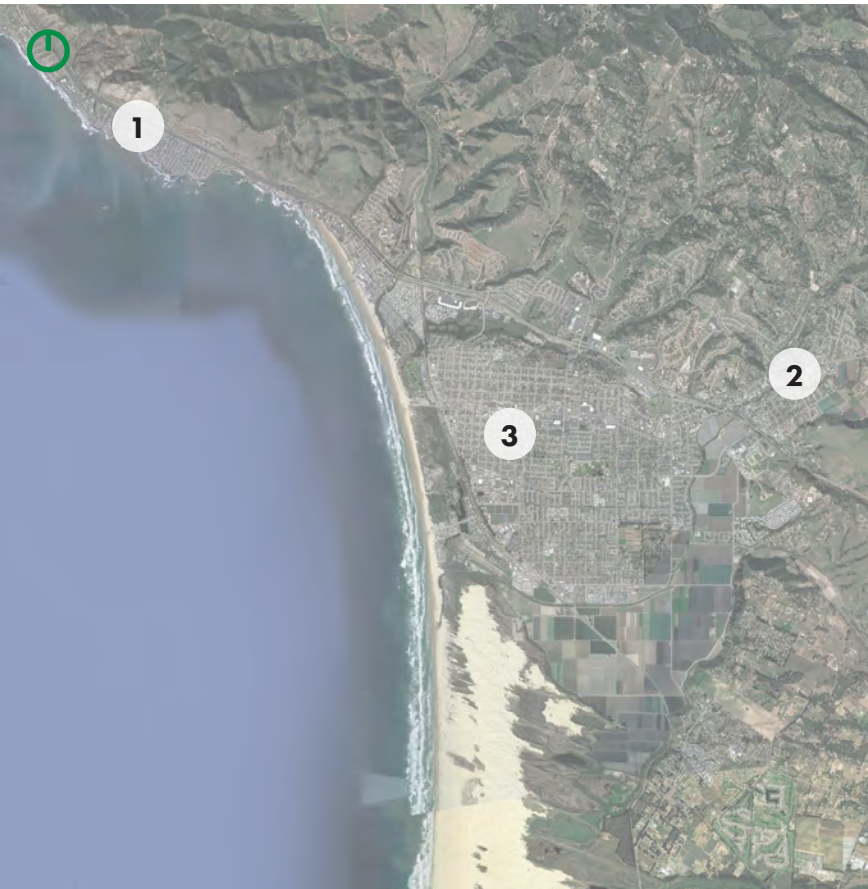
School + Community Engagement



The Triplets

The prototype multipurpose room was designed for three schools within the Lucia Mar Unified School District:

- Shell Beach Elementary School
- Branch Elementary School
- Grover Heights Elementary School



The Perfect Scenario

These schools house a similar number of students, and were in need of similar facilities. So, a prototype design with alterations made based on site conditions and neighborhood needs were an efficient solution.

Shell Beach Elementary School is located in the beautiful coastal community of Pismo Beach, California. Despite a population 340 students, they maintain a “small school” feel. This is due in large part to their dedicated team of teachers, parents, and community volunteers. They are dedicated to accelerating the academic and social-emotional growth of ALL students.



Branch Elementary School serves students from the rural countryside near Arroyo Grande, located along the picturesque coastline of San Luis Obispo County. The school maintains a close-knit family feeling, while providing a rigorous academic program. The caring, dedicated, and experienced staff works in tandem with parents and community members to ensure all students receive the highest quality education possible.



Grover Heights Elementary School serves students of the Grover Beach Community, a city nestled along the Central Coast of California. They aim to create an inclusive and safe environment that promotes a growth mindset and challenges every student to be future ready. Teachers and staff work hard to maintain a high standard of academic instruction to foster lifelong learners who will contribute to society in a meaningful way.



Part of the Neighborhood

Local Community

The three sites where new multipurpose rooms were developed are all neighborhood schools. The students and their families live close by and are engaged in similar activities, groups, and interests. Local residents have a vested interest in seeing these schools and their students thrive.

The multipurpose rooms act as an event space in the evenings and weekends for groups to meet, get to know one another, and converse on topics that affect their community. From PTA meetings to performances, the space is brought to life by local organizations.

Shell Beach Elementary was the first to be completed, the local community engaged in meetings in order to address the place and people most effectively. One topic which came up and was included in the design, was reconfiguring the parking lot to alleviate traffic on roads around the school.



Students

The students of these schools are grades Kindergarten through 6th grade and local to the area. Being at school is not only about learning from a workbook, but also learning social skills. They require more supervision and care different than older students.

The mode of transportation students utilize to get to campus varies throughout the district. Shell Beach and Branch Elementary schools are near the boundary edge of the district and as such they have less students walking to campus. Significant emphasis was placed on placing

the multipurpose room at Shell Beach to provide ease of access from the parking lots which were significantly reconfigured to improve the flow of traffic during pick-up and drop-off times.

Creating Opportunities

Programmatic Elements + Project Goals

Student Drop Off-Area
Specifically at Shell Beach, Reconfiguration of the parking lot + drop-off zone to alleviate traffic on the main road + improve pedestrian + vehicle safety

Kitchen
Improves nutritional service operations + creates efficient queuing to serve a greater number of students in less time

Restrooms
Readily available + accessible to students; implementation of low flow fixtures reducing water usage

Outdoors Eating Area
An opportunity for optional learning environment, project space, and connection to outdoors for students

Stage
Available for both academic engagement, after-school performances, + community events

Storage
School supplies, physical activity equipment, janitorial supplies + technology readily available for any activity to take place.



Cost Savings

Paid for using general obligations bonds, Lucia Mar USD was passionate about using their budget responsibly and efficiently. They challenged the designers to ensure everything they included was purposeful and to conserve funds which could be utilized on other projects down the road.



Equity

Limited by funds, the school district chose to invest in a multipurpose room as it is one of a few buildings on campus which would benefit every student. The design would need to implement systems thinking to be as versatile and accommodating as possible. This way it would have the greatest and most equitable impact on the educational experience of all students.



Inadequate + Ageing Facilities

During the design process, school district staff identified issues with the previous multipurpose rooms which became important factors in the design of the prototype MPR. Low ceilings and bad acoustics made for a lack luster experience discouraging teachers and students alike from using the rooms. These shortcomings became inspiration for an improved experience.



Assets

Teachers + Staff

Teachers and staff of Lucia Mar School District are deeply rooted in their community. Many of them have taught in the district for years, some were products of it themselves. These entrenched experiences make them uniquely knowledgeable about the culture, values, and needs of their student body and their support systems.

Common Needs

All three elementary schools are similar in student population, but serve diverse demographics. This prototype was designed to effectively serve the core common programmatic needs, while also allowing flexibility for each school to use it in the manner that best serves their students, faculty, and community.

Value of Process + Project

Activating the Community

These are neighborhood schools, the students and their families live close by and are engaged in similar activities, groups, and interests. Local residents have a vested interest in seeing these schools and their students thrive. This project is notable both in its presence and function within the community. Public outreach meetings were held to take hear the input of locals and make them feel like part of the process.

From local organization meetings and gatherings to providing after-school care for children, this space hosts a wide range of events and activities. The multipurpose rooms can be found in use most days of the week, at any time of day.

Sparkling Excitement

Students and staff take pride in their beautiful, improved multipurpose rooms. They are eager to utilize the space for the simple enjoyment of getting to be there. Kitchen staff are now more efficiently able to prepare and serve meals to the campus student body, relieving stress. Students know that no matter the weather they will have a space to run and play for recess.

Investing in the arts

Prior to this project, there was no space on campus designed for the performing arts. The stage inside the multipurpose rooms along with the sound system the district has invested in allows the students to learn and engage in a whole new scope of interests and skills.



2

Educational Environment



Engage, challenge, and inspire ALL student

Creating life long learners capable of reaching their fullest potential

LUCIA MAR CORE VALUES

INTEGRITY

EXCELLENCE

TEAMWORK

PERSONAL BEST

INNOVATION

LEARNING AT
HIGH LEVELS

RESILIENCE

The Lucia Mar School District emphasizes a passion to provide quality education and enable habits of **life long learning to ALL students**. Equity and Inclusion are at the forefront of their goals and aspirations; they know that every student has the capacity to excel.

physical activity. With future support from state funding, art and music programs are being expanded. They are eager to invest and create opportunities for students to find outlets to be creative and work together in a variety of new formats.

With those ideals in mind, the school district aims to provide staff and students with facilities that will allow them to engage in a holistic and equitable education. Through this project, the district sought to diversify the capacity of the MPRs to promote various programs from the visual and performing arts to

Similarly, there is a need for a variety of spaces to allow for differing teaching styles and curriculum. The MPR spaces provide for flexibility while teaching, allowing students to move around, learn, and play in more ways than can be accommodated in a traditional classroom.



Supporting Curriculum

Supporting Staff

Without proper resources and facilities, teachers struggle to provide students with the highest standard of education. This is particularly evident during the winter months, when students are forced back into their classrooms by the rain. Distracted by entertaining and supervising students in their classrooms, teachers’ preparation periods are taken away from them, leaving them with limited time to ready their daily coursework.

The previous modular multipurpose rooms were too small, and in poor condition. Staff were unable to comfortably navigate the MPR, and could not rely on the space to accommodate movement activities. This forced teachers to divert their attention from engaging with students and curriculum to inventing ways to make their lesson plans fit within the limitations of their classrooms or inadequate, modular facilities.

The multipurpose room prototype is an economical way for the District to offer more space and amenities to teachers. This expands their curriculum to a wider range of activities and allows them to focus on instruction time with students rather than finding work around tasks.

Alternative Classroom

While the MPR serves as a daily dining space, its stage area enables student to engage in performance art, music and dance in a high volume space with plenty of seating space for audience.

The spacious MPRs can host rainy day recess with plenty of daylighting and room to move. The walls covered with tackable panels offer display space for artwork and achievements. And of course, the community is welcomed for community meetings, after-school presentations, back to school nights and awards ceremonies.

The high-volume ceiling is acoustically treated and accommodates projection and lighting for those special events. Programming and curriculum have been greatly expanded and enhanced with the addition of these multipurpose rooms.



Variety

Expanding the possibilities of alternative instruction, the new multipurpose rooms allow for:

Small Break Out Groups Instruction

The prototype MPR is a secondary space for instruction of smaller groups needing focus time on specific subjects. Students can spread out across the room while individual student assessments are made. This alternative area allows them the space to divide and allocate attention to the specific needs of each student.

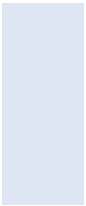
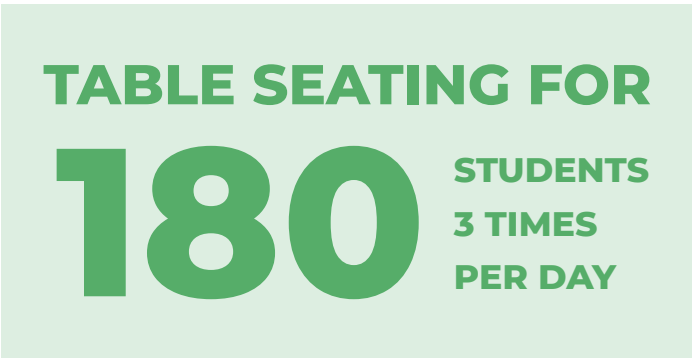
Large Group Demonstrations

A multitude of large gatherings can occur in the MPR. School assemblies bring different grade levels together for shared functions. It serves as a performance venue for music, theater, and dance which can be enjoyed by the entire school community. This can create a sense of camaraderie and collective achievement.

Activities with Physical Engagement

The expansive area enables students to use space in a distinctively compared to the traditional classroom, where desks often constrain movement. Movement associated with ideas and skills can be a powerful learning tool for students. This is also a captivating learning style which maintains the students' focus.

Furthermore, Engaging with physical activity is vital for both physical and mental well-being. These multipurpose rooms provide opportunities for indoor sports and games.



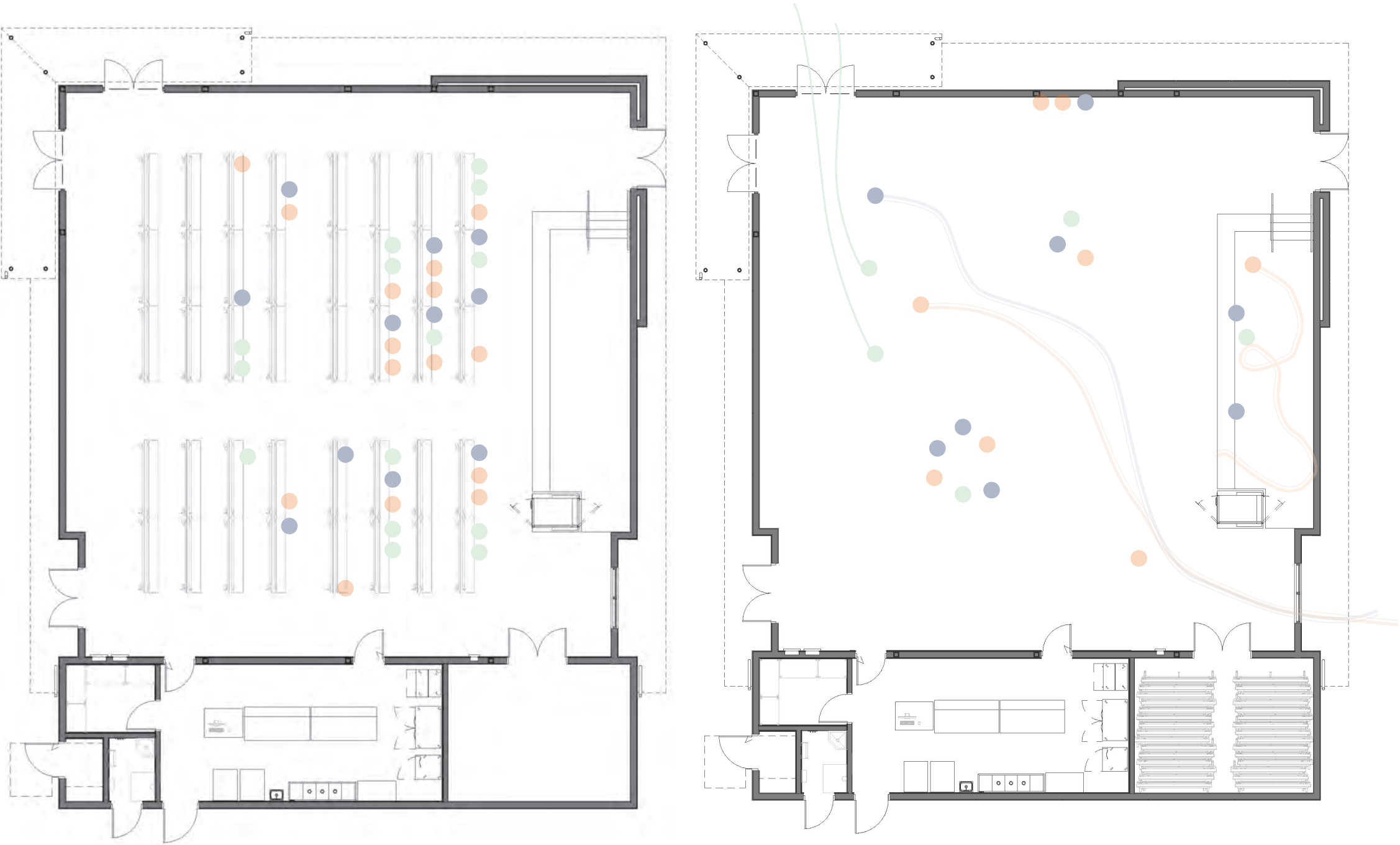
Truly MULTI-purpose

The Lucia Mar Multipurpose Room Prototype is an idea generated on the basis of design flexibility across campuses, and adaptability within the project.

The multipurpose rooms offer a versatile, expansive space that can adapt to variety of functions. The space can be utilized as a dynamic alternative classroom, offering students a change of scenery that fosters engaging and innovative learning environments.

The MPRs have also become valuable assets during unfavorable weather, accommodating for PE, recess activities, and/or indoor sports.. The spaces allow students to get adequate exercise and recharge time needed to fully engage in the classroom.

Lastly, the limitless possibilities for configuring the space make it an ideal location for various events and gatherings. From the most anticipated day of the year for a grade school student – the Scholastic Book Fair – to serving as the location for PTA meetings or public outreach events, these multi-functional spaces truly enrich the educational experience and enhance the overall functionality of the school.

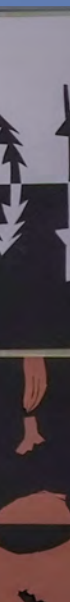
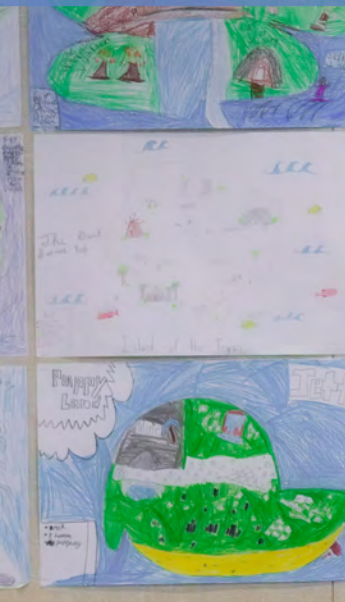


They layout of furniture or the lack thereof can activate the space differently. Pictured above is a floor plan with benches facing the stage for a presentation or performance, and a floor plan void of furniture for students to play. Tables are also available to set up the MPR as a dining space.

3

Physical Environment

Mrs.
Boatenhamer's
Class



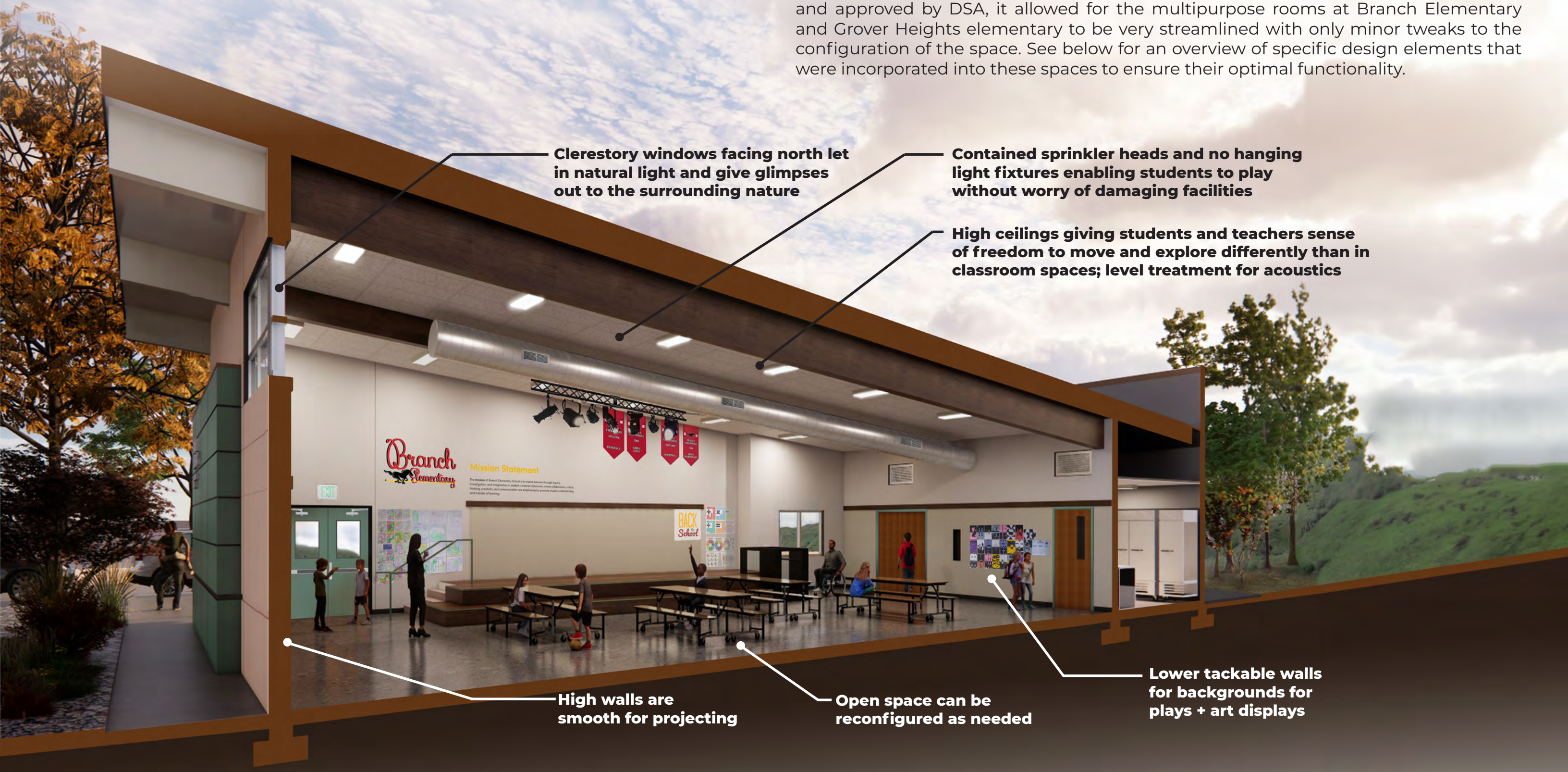
Adaptable, Durable, + Purposeful

The newly constructed multipurpose rooms are a testament to the district’s investment in student success. These versatile additions to each school were carefully designed to accommodate a variety of functions, with meticulous attention to detail ensuring they will continue to function optimally at each unique site and for each purpose.

The former multipurpose spaces on each campus were comprised of four modular units stitched together into a single room. These facilities had several shortcomings, such as

low ceilings, limited windows and natural light, and a lack of dedicated kitchen or serving space. Consequentially, students and faculty lacked a sense of pride and connection with the space.

On the contrary, the new facilities provide numerous improvements for the schools and their communities. As the first site to be designed, Shell Beach Elementary MPR served as the blueprint for the remaining two sites. Once their design was completed and approved by DSA, it allowed for the multipurpose rooms at Branch Elementary and Grover Heights elementary to be very streamlined with only minor tweaks to the configuration of the space. See below for an overview of specific design elements that were incorporated into these spaces to ensure their optimal functionality.



Clerestory windows facing north let in natural light and give glimpses out to the surrounding nature

Contained sprinkler heads and no hanging light fixtures enabling students to play without worry of damaging facilities

High ceilings giving students and teachers sense of freedom to move and explore differently than in classroom spaces; level treatment for acoustics

High walls are smooth for projecting

Open space can be reconfigured as needed

Lower tackable walls for backgrounds for plays + art displays

Adaptable, Durable, + Purposeful

Varying elements and site specific adaptations:

Shell Beach Elementary School

- main roof rotated to leverage tilt toward northern light
- added restroom volume
- blue paint color to match campus

Branch Elementary School

- door replaced with window to accommodate grade
- green paint color to match campus

Grover Heights Elementary School

- kitchen door moved to accept food deliveries
- blue paint color to match campus



Before

Bridging + Embracing

The multipurpose rooms have evolved into welcoming spaces and point of entry monuments for their respective campuses, reflecting the strong bond between a dedicated, collaborative community and their beloved schools.

Each MPR location was thoughtfully positioned at the campus entrance, ensuring easy access and a seamless connection between the school and the wider community. They are easily identifiable and have highly visible and

legible signage and fenestration which calls people to come on in.

These buildings play a pivotal role in hosting a wide array of events, both community and student focused. From community celebrations to PTA meetings to student assemblies and performances, the facilities are frequented by both on-campus and off-campus community members and supporters.

Standing as thresholds between the front parking area and the heart of the campus, the facilities greet all to their respective campuses while maintaining security and accessibility for those within the school grounds.



Educating + Learning with Excitement

“Interestingly, we have a drama teacher who retired two years ago. When I was describing to him our new MPRs over a coffee on Saturday morning, **he lit up.** Now, he is wanting to get back in with the district to do some substitute teaching, so he can provide some drama opportunities for these kids. He was drawn to do that simply because of these modern facilities.

They are modern.
They are attractive.
They are inviting.

Every staff member who has gone into these has had nothing but great reviews to give us on their level of satisfaction.”

- Andy Stenson, Executive Director
of Facilities, Maintenance, +
Operations



Shell Beach Elementary School



Branch Elementary School



Grover Heights Elementary School

Performance + Sustainability

The prototype multipurpose room design places a strong emphasis on high performance and sustainability to ensure a long lifespan for the facility and to reduce operational costs for the district.

Passive design principles played a pivotal role in the design, with north-facing windows strategically incorporated to optimize natural lighting and reduce the reliance on artificial illumination, leading to substantial energy savings. Additionally, the roof's northward tilt was designed to allow for maximum efficiency of future solar panels, contributing to the utilization of renewable energy

The project made use of engineered lumber which provides for efficiency in the structural system and reduces waste during construction. Through its consistent dimensions the environmental footprint of this project was reduced.

The project also invested in energy-efficient appliances and fixtures, ensuring operational efficiency while minimizing energy consumption. This approach not only lowers long-term operational costs but also aligns with broader environmental conservation objectives. By adopting these high-performance and sustainability measures, the project harmoniously combines functionality with a commitment to responsible environmental practices, serving also as an educational opportunity for students using the space.

Ultimately these passive design strategies and material choices resulted in a reduction of TDV energy use, an average 35% improvement from standard design.



4

Results of the Process + Project





“There is nothing you see in these MPR’s where you think ‘wow that was an unnecessary use of dollars’”

Maximum Impact on a Budget

The objectives of this project were straightforward but impressively impactful: staying within budget, reaching the widest number of users, and giving much-needed updates to aging facilities. But it was the team’s practical approach to those goals that led to such remarkable outcomes.

Staggering the construction and adopting a prototype design were the cornerstones of the project’s cost-saving strategy. Starting with the Multipurpose Room design for Shell Beach Elementary allowed the project team to troubleshoot and refine the process, leading to smoother and more efficient construction at Branch Elementary and Grover Heights Elementary. Valuable lessons from the initial site reduced both construction costs and timelines, making the project a financial success.

Specific design elements took cost-conservancy a step further: simple structure, efficient framing, and intuitive features all streamlined the building

process. The use of engineered lumber ensured precision and consistency, making tasks like installing drywall and cabinets easier and faster. An unintended result of this process was the same contractor for subsequent schools led to more efficient construction, saving both time and labor costs and contributing to the project’s overall affordability.

The project’s real allure lies in its ability to provide remarkable value to the school district. These multipurpose rooms, while affordable, have created well-designed, efficient spaces that benefit all students and educators that use them. The positive impact of these spaces have gone beyond the district’s initial goals, with Facilities Manager Andy Stetson even noting that the spaces are being used in ways they hadn’t initially imagined, enhancing the learning environment and bringing tangible benefits to the entire school community. ***Overall, this project is a testament to how practical decisions can lead to transformative outcomes.***

A Sense of Pride

The schools and their community are synergetic; the prototype enhances them together.

These prototype multipurpose rooms are immense improvements from their predecessor spaces. The thoughtfulness put toward the needs of the community at large and the emphasis placed on creating a valuable and beautiful design demonstrates a respect toward the community.

The schools are among the largest buildings and significant presences in their area, and this investment has made a place that reflects the pride individuals feels for their community. A simple, yet elegant design invites supporters and community members to observe students work and the learning environment. The MPR provides a perfect opportunity to showcase student work through art, project displays, and stage performances.

The school district wisely invested taxpayer dollars in a manner that was efficient and economical resulting in an outstanding return on investment.



Looking Ahead

The prototype has leveraged resources and enabled growth in a significant way, and the impact will only grow moving forward.

In 2022, Proposition 28: The Arts and Music in Schools Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act was approved by voters in California. The measure requires the state to establish a new, ongoing program supporting arts instruction in schools which began this 2023–24 school year.

The prototype multipurpose room has set up Branch, Shell Beach, and Grover Heights Elementary Schools for success. It will support and enhance future proposition 28 curriculum. They will serve as a space for sharing the productions and work of students generate in the classroom. The next step for Lucia Mar USD will be to create a prototype classroom dedicated to Visual and Performing Arts curriculum.

The ultimate accomplishment of the prototype was inspiring learning for hundreds of students every school year.

PROPOSITION 28
THE ARTS AND MUSICS
IN SCHOOLS FUNDING +
GUARANTEE ACT

