

VILLAGE SCHOOL

Classroom Renovation and Furniture Services



Executive Summary

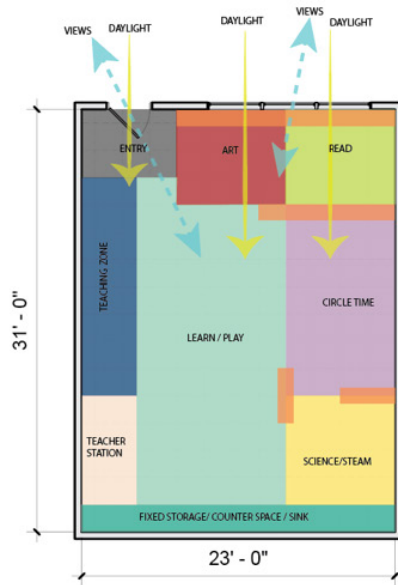
Village School is a TK-6 private school that has a strong commitment to small class sizes and personalized learning experiences. Our first project kick-off occurred at the start of the pandemic and focused on the renovation of (2) classrooms during the summer of 2021. The success of this project initiated the renovation of all remaining classrooms. Our scope of services included visioning sessions, faculty surveys, working sessions, and interviews; development of prototypical and specialized space specifications; furniture selection and installation; lighting and finish material selections; cost estimating and fund-raising; renderings and animations. After completing the visioning and engagement sessions the following classroom design principles were developed to guide the creative solutions and resulted in spaces that:

1. Children can freely move, explore, design and create.
2. Gives children the opportunity to choose where they learn.
3. Has a clean modern aesthetic that supports health and wellness.
4. Enhances and “showcases” student work.
5. Includes the latest technology in lighting controls.
6. Promotes school community connections.

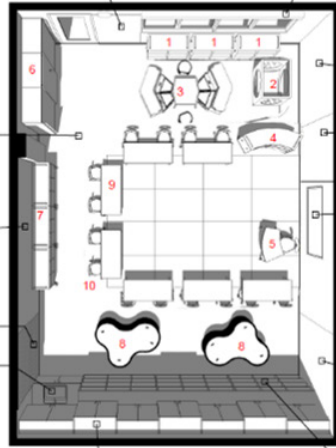


Scope of Work and Budget

Activity Zoning Sketch



Detailed Furniture Layouts



Preliminary Renderings of Concept Design Ideas



Scope of Work

The scope of work was limited to the following categories:

1. New interior finishes; includes wall surfaces (magnetic/writable surfaces, graphics and paint), flooring, area rugs, acoustical ceiling panels (the grid remained), and window treatment.
2. New light fixtures and lighting controls.
3. Data outlets and educational technology remained as is and coordinated with the design.
4. New mobile furniture for teachers and students. Special attention was given to selecting items that supported the students physical developmental levels.
5. Minimal fixed casework that allows for easy student access of materials with open shelving and dedicated teacher storage that is adjustable for each grade level grouping's needs.

Budget

\$3,100,000 (including furniture) for 16,300 SF for a total of \$190/SF.

School & Community Engagement

Q12 From the following list, select UP TO THREE that stand out to you as particularly important in supporting and enhancing the CURRENT teaching/learning experience.

Answered: 38 Skipped: 8

TOP 5	#1	#2	#3	TOTAL
Flexible furniture to allow for ease of movement and a change in learning settings	66.67% 10	33.33% 5	0.00% 0	15
Allowance for different activities (such as small group work, individual study, class discussion, etc.)	38.46% 5	30.77% 4	30.77% 4	13
Space for project based / hands on learning (such as sinks, cleanable surfaces, movable furniture, etc.)	8.33% 1	41.67% 5	50.00% 6	12
Technology infrastructure to meet the learning/teaching needs	81.82% 9	18.18% 2	0.00% 0	11
A design that uses color (walls, flooring, etc.) in a way that enhances the learning environment	10.00% 1	20.00% 2	70.00% 7	10
Adequate teacher storage	22.22% 2	33.33% 3	44.44% 4	9

The Community

Village is a vibrant and thriving learning community where teachers work hard to expand the minds of their students while partnering with parents to raise children who actively engage in our dynamic world.

Village School broadens possibilities by cultivating a spirit of persistence and academic excellence. Their curricula goes beyond reading, writing, and mathematical understanding, inspiring critical thinking, creative expression, and unhurried reflection.

Q13 From the following list, select UP TO THREE that stand out to you as particularly important in supporting and enhancing the teaching/learning experience TEN YEARS from now.

Answered: 36 Skipped: 10

TOP 5	#1	#2	#3	TOTAL
Technology infrastructure to meet the learning/teaching needs	61.90% 13	28.57% 6	9.52% 2	21
Universal design that supports all learners; designed from multiple developmental perspectives (such as symbols with text on signage for young readers)	21.43% 3	42.86% 6	35.71% 5	14
Allowance for different activities (such as small group work, individual study, class discussion, etc.)	33.33% 3	44.44% 4	22.22% 2	9
Space for project based / hands on learning (such as sinks, cleanable surfaces, movable furniture, etc.)	33.33% 3	55.56% 5	11.11% 1	9
A design that is playful and humorous to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere	0.00% 0	37.50% 3	62.50% 5	8
Flexible furniture to allow for ease of movement and a change in learning settings	28.57% 2	42.86% 2	28.57% 2	7

The Stakeholders

1. Leadership (Head of School and Assistant Principal, and Chief Financial Officer).
2. A group of 8 teachers with a focus on (4) grade level classroom types and (3) specialized classrooms.
3. All faculty responded to an online survey to assess their existing rooms and identify deficiencies to inform the design principles.
4. The School Facility Committee and Plant Supervisor reviewed the drawings and specifications for material standards and maintenance, verified cost estimates and identified bid packages to address lead time concerns during the pandemic.



Challenges

The biggest obvious challenge was permitting, procuring materials, and having a healthy work force to construct this project (on-time) in the midst of a pandemic. We overcame these obstacles by advising the school to hire an expeditor to successfully permit the plans through Los Angeles Building Department, bidding the project in packages (separating the millwork) to ensure the best possible price and delivery of products, and setting protocols in place to maintain the health and safety of the workers while planning a construction schedule

to include overtime hours with smaller crews. Following these precautions, we suggested very early procurement of the furniture. Though the furniture was coming from Germany, Village School had secured source materials which did not depend upon out of country vendors and secure shipping lanes that minimized the wait once it arrived at the Port of Los Angeles. In spite of all these challenges, the project was delivered on time for teacher and student to occupancy in the 2022 school year.



Available Assets

The most valuable asset was an engaged and interactive client. Having the ability to workshop the classroom types with the teachers helped the design team better understand how they work in the classroom, the level of engagement that they expect from the students, and how the design solutions proposed would support their activities.

Additionally, the contractor (CW Driver SPD) was exceptional in working collaboratively to suggest alternate solutions and/or products to keep the project moving while not compromising the quality of the work and the design intent.



EXISTING CLASSROOM PRIOR TO RENOVATION

Value to the Community

It was hard on so many levels for this school during the pandemic; a new Head of School came on board, teachers and students were working remotely and one of their beloved leaders, that provided the vision for this project, passed away. The process was inclusive and brought a new level of excitement to coming back to school. We understand that the 2022/23 school year enrollment increased and are in the process of scheduling a post-occupancy evaluation to learn more about the impacts and outcomes.

Educational Environment



Educational Vision and Goals

Village School students love learning, they are engaged, active, and joyful participants in a supportive, warm, and nurturing environment. We knew that the design of the spaces needed to be more flexible and learner responsive to support activities that engage and foster autonomy and agency within environments that are calming, comforting, and supportive for reflection work.



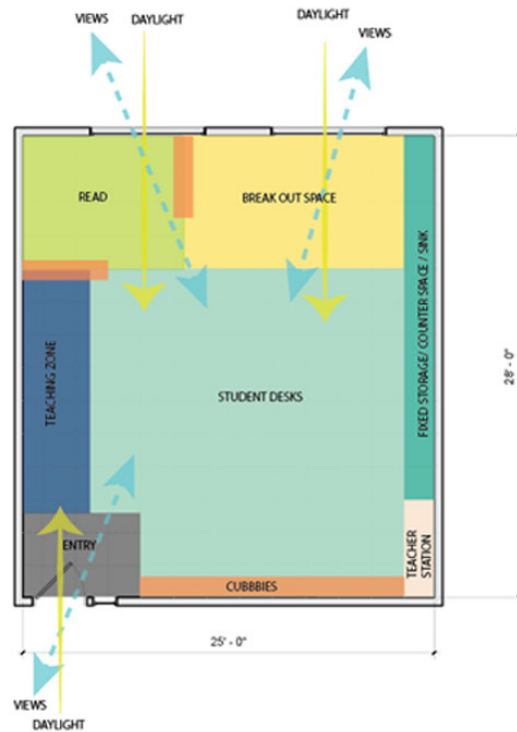
How the Environment Supports the Curriculum, a Variety of Learning and Teaching Styles, and is Adaptable and Flexible

Although we all learn uniquely-there are some key elements that help foster motivation to best support the process of learning. Autonomy, Connections, Mastery, Movement, and Reflection. Each of these activities can be supported by well-designed indoor environment (lighting, color, finishes, textures), furniture selections, and layout adaptability. For Village School, we designed learner responsive settings to support a variety of activities at the child's developmental levels.



Designed for Connections

- Interactive walls, peg boards, tack boards, and writable surfaces allow for students to create their space, to showcase their work, and to self-reflect as a part of a larger learning community.
- There are wall surfaces throughout for casual collaboration and sharing of ideas to encourage connections with peers.



Designed for a Diverse Palette and Learning Styles

- Each of the spaces are designed to provide a variety of activity settings within the classroom tailored specific to each age group. This is done through selecting diverse furniture types that are mobile, scaled appropriately, easily reconfigured to create a diverse palette of places to support a variety of student learning preferences.
- Research has shown that having a variety of settings improves movement and mastery of the environment; increasing the engagement of the learner.
- Some of the furniture elements can flip, nest, and stack up, allowing the occupants to open up of the classroom for movement and to personalize and “make” their space designed to their needs.
- The selected furniture gives student choices of where they work; provides for collaborative work and quiet nooks (couches, soft stools, bench seating) and floor rugs for individual work.



Designed to Showcase Student Work

- The interior wall color palette is neutral to not take away from the student work
- The color mood is intended to provide vibrant simulation with a larger balance of low colors on the color scale (like the neutrals and natural colors and textures).
- We initially provided floor to ceiling writable, magnetic surfaces and tackable surfaces, so that the lower portion of the wall (5' and below) was for student use and 5' and up was for teacher use and display.

Physical Environment



Physical Attributes of the Environment

The existing classrooms were made up of traditional classroom furniture, with any variety provided, being random items brought in by teachers. The spaces did not feel welcoming and bright but rather more institutional and stale. The design sought to transform the spaces to better enhance the amazing teaching and learning happening every day. We were limited in the scope upgrades to interior finishes, lighting, and furniture; however, the outcome was transformed spaces that allowed for the creation of diverse and agile settings to meet the needs of the students and Village School's teaching approach.

How the Facility fits within the Larger Context of the Community

This project was an interior renovation of all the classrooms, it had no direct connection to the surrounding community but as a

collection of spaces that make up a learning space; it shares a common theme that each student is unique and has individual needs. It also reflects that variation of needs change as we grow and develop.

How Village School Inspires and Motivates

When visiting the school after 8 months into its occupancy, it was fascinating to see the variety of ways in which the teachers laid out their classrooms. The new design allows for more creative use of the space and interaction with the students to better decide how their spaces can be transformed to meet their preferred learning styles.

Role of High-Performance/Sustainability

Designed for Health and Wellness

- The furniture sizes were selected to the age group development; this has a significant impact on comfort, wellness and engagement.
- Quality of materials are essential to ensuring good indoor air quality. The selection of materials meet low to no-VOC standards, Formaldehyde-free plywood and other criteria needed to ensure the best quality indoor air.
- Selecting durable materials provides for the ideal environment for students to maintain good attendance and learning performance.
- Wall graphics with biophilic imagery and nature inspired textures promote a sense of calm and comfort.
- Optimal environmental qualities include improved acoustics, natural, and artificial lighting. The new design includes new acoustical ceiling panels and artificial lighting with controls to allow for different settings. Where natural daylight is restricted; the light fixtures will mimic the quality of natural daylight. The lighting controls allowed (4) zones to create a variety of different lighting moods in the space. We selected non-traditional light fixtures to remove the institutional feel that traditional classroom fixtures give off.
- Studies indicate that keeping between 20-50% of the wall surfaces clear helps reduce visual distractions and complexity to increase student focus. The interior wall design has taken this into consideration.

Designed to Embrace Movement

- The seating is ergonomic allowing students to sit dynamically and experience physical, mental, and developmental benefits.
- Research has shown that small movements stimulate neurons in the brain to keep us attentive.
- The design provides options for students to sit and stand and even lounge while they work.

Results of the Process & Project



Achieving Educational Goals and Objectives

The project aligns with the school's educational goals by creating an environment that supports personalized learning experiences. The flexible and adaptable spaces cater to diverse learning styles and foster autonomy among students. Interactive walls and diverse furniture encourage collaboration, critical thinking, and creative expression. The emphasis on showcasing student work promotes a sense of pride and accomplishment, reinforcing the school's commitment to academic excellence.

Achieving School District Goals

The project contributes to the school's goals by enhancing the overall learning experience. By providing state-of-the-art facilities and flexible classrooms, Village can attract and retain high-quality teachers and motivated students. The engaging and functional environment promotes a positive reputation for the District, reinforcing its commitment to providing top-notch education.

Achieving Community Goals

The project supports community goals by creating vibrant and dynamic learning settings. The renovated classrooms provide a positive and stimulating atmosphere for learning and teaching as the larger learning community.

Unintended Results and Achievements of the Process and Project

Throughout the process, several unintended positive outcomes occurred. Engaging teachers in the design process resulted in a stronger sense of commitment to creating engaging lessons; now that the spaces allowed easy reconfiguration, a variety of groupings, and intentional use of all walls in teaching and learning activities.

The spaces are quite small (ranging from 700 – 830 SF) so to imagine that good design can make a space feel larger was a pleasant unintended outcome.

“We just had our families tour the campus this morning and the feedback is outstanding. Families shared things like, wow the rooms are beautiful, gorgeous, stunning, simple, clean, modern and HUGE! It is funny to me that a good renovation can actually seem to change square footage... even when it absolutely did not. There were many comments about the craftsmanship, the lighting and the incredible intentionality of the spaces. I AM SO GRATEFUL. Thank you TEAM!”

– John Evans, Head of School

From a more anecdotal perspective, we anticipate this project will increase student engagement and participation. The redesigned classrooms, tailored to students’ needs and preferences could lead to higher levels of motivation for learning. This might positively impact academic performance and overall school atmosphere. We are completing a post-occupancy evaluation in the next few months to further explore this outcome.

The project inadvertently strengthened the sense of community within the school, with the loss of their beloved leader and a new Head of School coming on board in the middle of the pandemic, the project’s collaborative efforts between stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and administrators, created a more unified and supportive community as they saw the realization of their shared vision come to fruition.

Lastly, the successful completion of the project, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, could serve as an inspiring example for future endeavors within the community; it certainly did for me as the Principal-in-Charge. I lovingly referred to this project as “The Little Engine that Could”, because every day our team recited “We think we can!” to make it up the proverbial hill. It showcases resilience, adaptability, and determination, setting a standard for overcoming obstacles and achieving collective goals.