

Driven by a robust community engagement process and a clear design statement, this project transformed a 1950's elementary school into a beacon of 21st century learning.

The process began with a public forum to articulate how the neighborhood school supported its students and community. This exercise resulted in a design statement crafted by the participants that captures the essence of their neighborhood school and reads "A nurturing community garden where everyone grows, learns and explores." The guiding principles that emerged from this collaboration were enhanced community connections, creating a safe place (physically, emotionally, creatively, acceptance), developing a learning campus, an abundance of natural light, aligning the facility with current 21st century instructional practices, strengthening nature-based outdoor connections and achieving greater district educational equity.

District equity was achieved within the site and budget constraints through a new secure entrance, welcoming lobby, administration addition, portable classroom removal, separate gym, new learning commons, infusing 21st century spaces throughout the existing school, code upgrades, safety and security features that align with district policies and procedures and right sizing the school.

A "whole child" philosophy that embraced the principles of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) was central to the educational design vision. Social development spaces that include a "nest", "cave", and "watering hole" accommodate diverse learning styles.

The interior celebrates the community vision of a "nurturing community garden". Graphics depicting Maine botanical elements provide a distinctive identity to discreet classroom neighborhoods to build community and enhance wayfinding. Natural materials and leaf-like acoustic ceiling elements ensure that every detail of the design reinforces the core concept.

LEED Silver standards guided the design. Wherever practical, rapidly renewable, or recycled materials were selected. A tight, well-insulated building envelope lowered operating costs, minimized resource consumption, and enhanced occupant comfort. A strong emphasis on daylighting and connections to the outdoors enhanced learning and improved overall wellbeing. Newly created landscaped courtyards blur the lines between inside and outside and bring the natural world "into" the building forming secured outdoor classrooms and gathering areas.

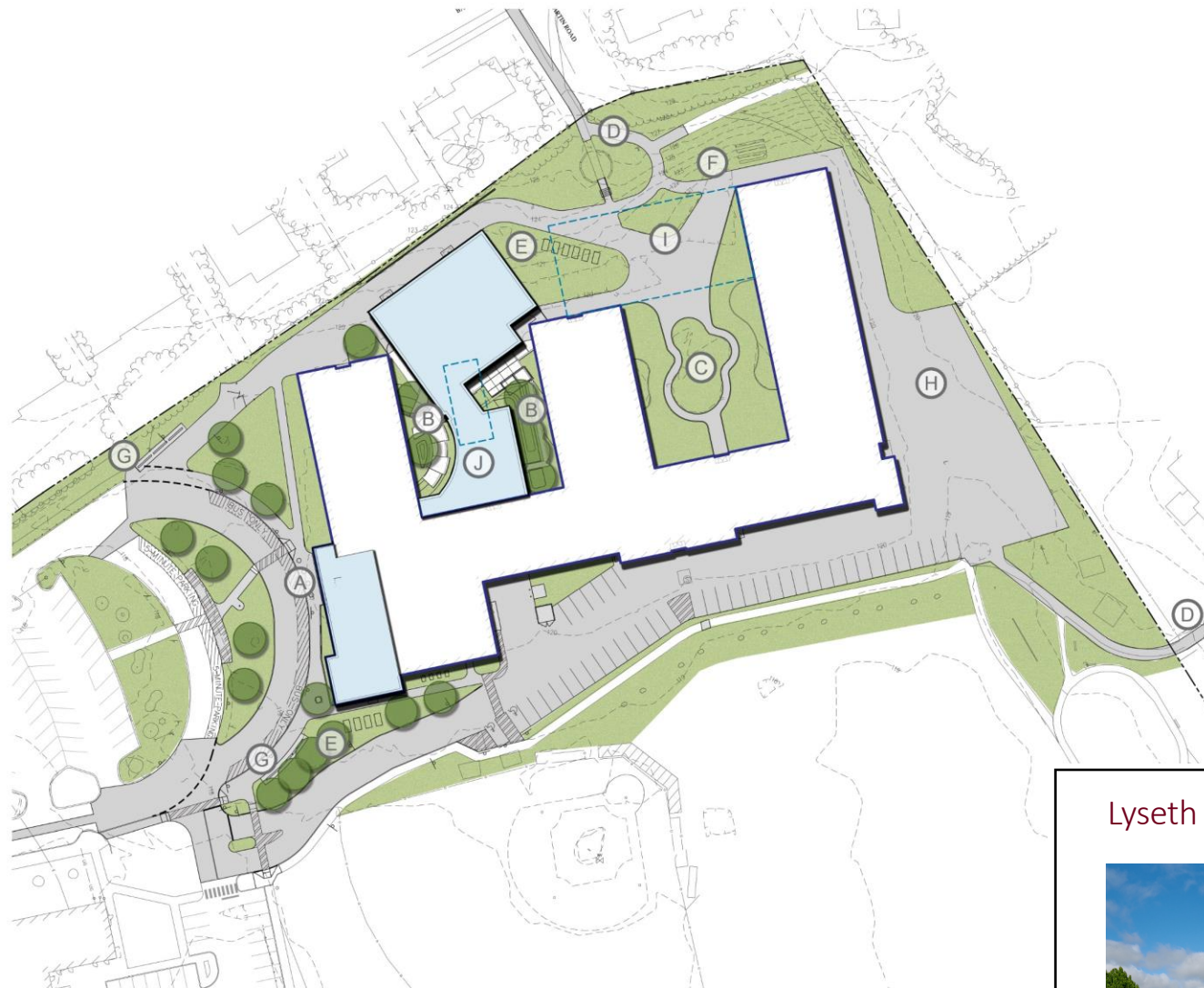
Delivered on time and within budget, the reimagined Lyseth Elementary School is a joyful, vibrant, and engaging community garden.



**Portland Public Schools |
Lyseth Elementary School
Addition and Renovation**

Harriman

Site Plan: 25-acre site shared with a Middle School and woven into an urban neighborhood, yielded limited building expansion locations.



KEY

- (A) WELCOMING AND SECURE MAIN ENTRY
- (B) SECURE LEARNING COURTYARD
- (C) ENHANCED EXISTING COURTYARD
- (D) NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS
- (E) RAISED GARDEN BEDS
- (F) EXISTING AMPHITHEATRE
- (G) BIKE RACKS
- (H) HARDSCAPE PLAY AREA
- (I) FUTURE ADDITION
- (J) REMOVAL OF EXISTING PORTABLE

LEGEND

- EXISTING BUILDING
- NEW ADDITION

NORTH



Lyseth Elementary School | Guiding Principles

Lyseth Elementary School Renovation and Addition



1. Learning Communities
2. Celebration of Learning
3. School as Community Resource
4. Flexible and Adaptable Spaces
5. Outdoor/Nature Connections
6. Differentiated Instruction

"A nurturing community garden where everyone grows, learns and explores."

Harriman

Floor Plan – Renovation and Expansion:
Illustrates the various levels of transformation throughout the building and the enhanced connections to nature.



KEY

- (A) WELCOMING AND SECURE ENTRY
- (B) ADMINISTRATION
- (C) WATERING HOLE
- (D) CONNECTION TO NATURE
- (E) LEARNING COMMONS
- (F) "NEST"
- (G) GYMNASIUM
- (H) SECURE LEARNING COURTYARD
- (I) CAFETERIA
- (J) ENHANCED EXISTING COURTYARD
- (K) CLASSROOM WINGS
- (L) CLASSROOM NEIGHBORHOOD "CAVES"

LEGEND

PARTIAL RENOVATION
PARTIAL RENOVATION (CIRCULATION)
MAJOR RENOVATION
NEW ADDITION



A
CAVE



D
LEARN



B
NEST



E
WELLNESS



C
NATURE



F
ENTRY



Floor Plan – Infusion of 21st Century Learning Spaces: Illustrates how various design patterns were integrated throughout the building.



Before: Main Entry



After: Welcoming Main Entry evokes pride and belonging. The scale, texture and colors reinforce a child's sense of belonging.



Before: Uninviting arrival into the school



After: Watering Hole - the arrival into the school is reimaged as a light filled, welcoming, active space for informal learning and peer engagement.

Connection to Nature – blurring the lines between inside and outside, these easily accessible, protected outdoor courtyards invite children to learn from and amongst nature.





Tiered seating under a canopy of leaves creates a “nest” to retreat, play and learn. Variety of spaces support students’ growth in diverse ways.



Secure courtyard spaces allow children to explore and experience the simple joy of learning within and from nature.



**Learning Commons -
Learning on display while
connecting to nature.
Window seats punctuate
the curved learning
commons wall creating
transparency to corridor
and courtyard beyond.**







Diverse secure interior courtyards allow for group and individual connections to nature. The library courtyard provides a respite for reflection, play and learning.



Wellbeing: A flexible indoor space that allows students to develop their senses through movement and play while maintaining a connection to the natural world.



Agile furnishing, abundance of natural light and finishes that support messy hands-on learning allow students to cultivate creativity and explore how things work.



Before: Existing corridor

After: The corridor is transformed into distinct classroom communities, creating identity through colorful learning caves, that celebrate student work and local flora.







Jury Questions:

Question 1 - Has or will a Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) of this project take(n) place? If so, please describe the POE as it related to specific design hypothesis or research informed interventions put-in-place in the project? And what metrics and or outcomes are being measured or found? (150 Word Limit)

The Post Occupancy Evaluation will take place after one full year of occupancy. It focuses on whether the project embodied the essence of the neighborhood school, achieved the project goals, supported more 21st century learning and the impact it had on the learners. We will poll the students, staff and community with questions such as those listed below in effort to understand if we succeeded in enhancing the essence of the Lyseth Community School:

- Describe your favorite parts of the school.
- Is there an increase in outdoor learning?
- Is outdoor learning more accessible?
- Where did peer to peer or peer to adult engagement happen before the renovation?
- Where does peer to peer or peer to adult engagement happen after the renovation? Has engagement increased?
- Does the renovation make you feel safe?
- Do you feel students have an equitable experience compared to peer schools within the district?

Jury Questions:

Question 2 - Please describe beyond what has been stated in the Project Narrative or Question One above certain specific details about how this submission: a. Worked with and or incorporate into the design "the current and future needs of its community".2. What "sustainability design features" where put-in-place (effort beyond meeting code minimums) when developing of this facility. (300 Word Limit in paragraph and or list format)

Community Vision

Every school project has a story; a narrative it conveys, a set of guiding principles it reinforces for its occupants, and a sense of belonging it shares with its internal and external community. We refer to this story as the project's Design Statement. As education designers, architects, planners, parents, and stewards, we want to share in the community that crafts that Design Statement for the project. We helped the community create a learning environment that is welcoming, safe, equitable, woven into the fabric of the neighborhood, and tells the unique story of the community. We facilitated this through a community forum that focused on four areas.

1. **Project overview:** We provided the Lyseth Community an overall project update. Reviewing our understanding of the project, stakeholder feedback and the equity model that will be applied to all the district elementary schools.
2. **Best Practices:** We educated the community on the 21st century best practices for elementary school design.
3. **Interactive Exercise:** We facilitated a process that creates consensus around the essence of the community school and the design strategies and patterns that support their unique vision. Building upon the participant's knowledge of the community, their newfound knowledge of best practices, the essence of their community school and design patterns that support the overall vision, a design statement is born. This process and outcome celebrates the unique identity of the school.
4. **Design Statement:** We tied the community-generated design statement back at each step of the design process to confirm the school design reflects the communities' values. A statement that reads, "A nurturing community garden where everyone grows, learns and explores." The design reflects the unique Lyseth community, their culture, their spirit, and their considerations. This carefully choreographed engagement and design process was a critical ingredient of the project's success.