



WINTER HILL COMMUNITY INNOVATION SCHOOL

Educational Visioning Report
February 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

In the fall of 2025 and winter of 2026, members of Somerville Public Schools participated in a series of Educational Visioning sessions facilitated by Educational Planner Mike Pirollo and Educational Consultant Paul White from My Learning Place Integrated Design, Inc., in collaboration with Perkins Eastman. Each session was part of a collaborative process designed to inform the Winter Hill Community Innovation School Building Project and align future design decisions with the district's educational priorities and the school's Innovation School identity.

Through interactive workshops, structured protocols, and reflective discussions, participants engaged in a step-by-step process aimed at capturing high-level thinking around the following:

- Educational, Architectural, and Community Priorities
- Developmental Traits and Needs of PK–8 Learners
- Current and Reimagined Student Experiences
- Vision of Teaching and Learning in a PK–8 Innovation School
- Vision of Learning Environments that Support Belonging, Inclusion, and the Whole Child

Throughout the process, participants shared insights about how students experience Winter Hill today, what learners need to thrive across developmental stages, and how environments, schedules, and systems can be intentionally designed to support both academic growth and social-emotional wellbeing.

The following summary highlights the key themes and outcomes that emerged, reflecting Somerville's collective vision for a future-ready, inclusive, and community-centered PK–8 Innovation School.

Overarching Project Goals & Priorities

The visioning process surfaced a clear set of guiding educational goals that will shape future planning and design decisions for Winter Hill Community Innovation School:

- A school where every student, educator, and family feels known, valued, and a strong sense of belonging
- An inclusive and responsive environment that supports specialized programs, multilingual learners, and diverse developmental needs without segregation
- Learning experiences that are hands-on, project-based, interdisciplinary, arts-integrated, and connected to community partnerships
- Flexible, purposeful, and human-centered spaces that support movement, collaboration, sensory needs, and multiple modes of teaching and learning
- A Welcome Center and community hub model that supports families, wraparound services, and engagement beyond the instructional day
- A future-ready building that is adaptable, multi-use, sustainable, and able to evolve with changing student needs and innovation practices

Together, these goals define a shared vision for Winter Hill as both a PK–8 Innovation School and a central community resource, a place that balances safety with openness and centers belonging, equity, and opportunity for all learners.

Developmental Considerations & Impacts

Participants examined the developmental characteristics of learners across a PK–8 span, emphasizing environments that balance play with structure, independence with support, and collaboration with opportunities for regulation and reflection. Students were described as needing movement, sensory-aware spaces, access to outdoor learning, meaningful adult relationships, and opportunities for both small-group engagement and unstructured social interaction.

These insights reinforced the importance of developmentally distinct yet connected elementary and middle school experiences. Participants supported upper and lower school structures that reflect differences in autonomy, identity development, and instructional models, while maintaining shared spaces that build community. Implications for design included separate yet connected entrances and circulation, advisory structures in the middle grades, flexible gathering and lunch spaces, integrated sensory supports, access to wellness resources, and environments designed first around what is best for children rather than operational efficiency.

Teaching, Learning, and the Vision of the Future School

Across all sessions, participants articulated a vision for Winter Hill as a PK–8 Innovation School grounded in experiential, student-centered, and community-connected learning. They envisioned project-based, interdisciplinary, arts-integrated, and STEM-rich experiences embedded in daily practice and supported by flexible scheduling and purposefully designed spaces. Educators emphasized inclusive co-teaching models and robust specialist programming, including visual arts, music, theater, movement, and life skills, to ensure all learners are engaged and challenged.

The Innovation School identity was framed not as a label, but as a commitment to flexibility, autonomy, restorative practices, inclusive excellence, and high expectations for every student. Participants also highlighted partnerships with local organizations to create “living labs” and real-world learning opportunities, while underscoring the importance of common planning spaces, professional learning hubs, and structures that support adult collaboration and innovation.

Design and Physical Space Implications

Participants described a future Winter Hill facility that is welcoming, adaptable, and intentionally organized to support both learning and wellbeing across a PK–8 continuum. Key design implications include:

- Distinct yet connected upper and lower school areas that respond to developmental needs
- Flexible classrooms designed for multiple adults, co-teaching, and varied instructional models
- Dedicated sensory rooms and built-in sensory supports within classrooms
- Outdoor classrooms and age-appropriate playgrounds integrated throughout the site
- Centralized shared spaces, including gyms, performance areas, specialist classrooms, and a learning commons that support both academic and community use

- A highly visible and accessible Welcome Center that serves as a hub for family engagement, basic needs support, and emotional connection
- Well-designed gathering spaces that prevent overwhelm and promote safety, including smaller lunch areas and calming environments
- Opportunities to showcase student work, creativity, and cultural identity throughout the building

The building is envisioned as an active contributor to culture, belonging, inclusion, and innovation. Flexibility, adaptability, and multi-use functionality are seen as essential to ensuring the school can evolve over time.

Community Vision

Ultimately, the Winter Hill community envisions a school that centers belonging, nurtures the whole child, and reflects the diversity and strengths of Somerville. A school where inclusivity is visible everywhere. A school where students are challenged academically, supported emotionally, and given meaningful choices in their learning.

The future Winter Hill Community Innovation School will reflect a commitment to equity, adaptability, collaboration, and community partnership. It will serve not only as a place of learning for children, but as a hub for families, educators, and neighbors; a school that embodies innovation, celebrates diversity, and creates a sense of pride and possibility for generations to come.

LAUNCH & INITIAL LISTENING

Overview

On November 14, 2025, members of Somerville Public Schools attended a meeting with Educational Planner Mike Pirolo from MLP Integrated Design, Inc., along with Perkins Eastman. This meeting was part of the visioning effort for the Winter Hill Community Innovation School building project. The goal of the meeting was to identify educational, architectural, and community goals and priorities.

Part 1 - Educational, Architectural, and Community Priorities

In Part 1, participants were given questions used to help them identify educational, architectural, and community priorities on individual sticky notes. After sharing their individual responses, participants grouped and categorized like-ideas to identify overarching project goals and considerations as documented below:

Project Goals:

- Build a Culture of Belonging, Care, and Community
- Ensure Inclusive and Responsive Supports for All Learners
- Support the Whole Child Through Wellness, Movement, and Environment
- Enable Effective Teaching, Learning, and Professional Collaboration
- Design for Flexibility, Longevity, and Adaptability Over Time
- Position the School as a Community Resource Beyond the School Day

Overarching goals, descriptors, and related individual responses are documented in the pages that follow.

Goal 1: Build a Culture of Belonging, Care, and Community

Design a school where students, staff, and families feel known, valued, and connected. Spaces should intentionally support relationships, recognition, joy, and a shared sense of community.

- Joy
- Care
- Connection
- Community
- Belonging
- Recognition
- Support and Empathy when needed, and Human Interactions

Goal 2: Ensure Inclusive and Responsive Supports for All Learners

Design environments that support diverse learners through inclusive planning, appropriate proximity of services, and spaces that respond to sensory and individual needs—without segregation.

- Inclusion
- Ensuring adequate spaces for our specialized programs, special educators and service providers.
- Spaces that take into account the sensory needs of our students.
- Special programming must be organized with proximity for professional collaboration and strategically located student supports, but in a manner that does not lead to any level of segregation

Goal 3: Support the Whole Child Through Wellness, Movement, and Environment

Design spaces that support students' social, emotional, and academic growth by prioritizing wellness, movement, natural elements, and opportunities for physical activity and regulation.

- It will be people who support this growth. The school must provide the physical spaces for that to happen. Through a broader perspective, I believe that natural light, clean air, proximity of soil, inviting exterior play spaces et cetera can all play a part in students feeling connected and alert, which are crucial for SE and academic learning.
- Large enough gym, outdoor, and a recreation community center space is essential for a new school to support SEL.
- Groundedness

Goal 4: Enable Effective Teaching, Learning, and Professional Collaboration

Design a building that supports varied instructional models, age-appropriate learning environments, and collaboration at multiple scales, enabling educators to work together effectively and educate the whole child.

- Primary rooms must be situated and designed differently than upper elementary and MS spaces; yet, the common areas will have to work for students age 5–15, and adults.
- If there are nine grades, four or five of them will be departmentalized.
- There must be ample space for collaboration on various scales: grade-level/grade-bands, support teams, whole-school, families, community partners, et cetera.
- The layout of building should allow for teachers and staff to communicate easily with those they work closely with.
- Educating the whole child

Goal 5: Design for Flexibility, Longevity, and Adaptability Over Time

Create a building that adapts over time, supporting evolving instructional practices, emerging technologies, and multi-purpose use through flexible, shared, and future-ready spaces.

- The building should be both cutting edge with current technology (in the construction and in what it allows for in teaching and learning) and anticipate advancements that are likely in the future (in the construction and teaching and learning), allowing for updates to be made more easily in the decades to come.
- Classrooms, cafe etc. should be planned out for multiple purposes, not just traditional learning styles. Think of more than just a library, but also a tech lab.
- Multi-use! Shared! Classrooms that are set up in a way to allow sharing easily. Storage and desk space for at least two. Learning spaces in places like the cafeteria that have storage and access to outdoor an outdoor play area.

Goal 6: Position the School as a Community Resource Beyond the School Day

Design the school to function as a community hub, balancing safety and security with welcoming, flexible spaces that support families, community programs, and use beyond the instructional day.

- The school should have spaces for families to connect, during the day with staff, and in workshops, support groups, et cetera, in off-school hours. The building must balance strong security with being inviting to families. Since we are in NE, there should also be ample indoor facilities for students, staff, and families to stay active in the cold months.
- Dedicated space for out of school time programs and for parent engagement and family support. In creating the layout think of a school during day and a community space at 2:30 and beyond.
- Safety

VISIONING 1 OVERVIEW

On January 20, 2026, members of Somerville Public Schools attended a meeting with Educational Planner Mike Pirolo and Educational Consultant Paul White from MLP Integrated Design, Inc., along with Perkins Eastman. This meeting was part of the visioning effort for the Winter Hill Community Innovation School building project. The session focused on developing a shared understanding of PK–8 learners and what powerful teaching and learning should look and feel like in a future Winter Hill PK–8 Innovation School. Participants engaged in collective reflection to articulate core beliefs and guiding educational principles that will shape the school's identity and support meaningful, developmentally responsive experiences for all students.

Part 1 – Understanding the Learner

In Part 1, participants explored research-based developmental characteristics of PK–8 learners and how these traits evolve across grade bands. Through structured reflection and discussion, groups identified defining academic, social-emotional, physical, and behavioral needs of students at different stages of development.

This work surfaced both commonalities and key differences across age levels and prompted reflection on implications for instruction, daily student experiences, and the role of the learning environment in supporting developmentally responsive practice.

Responses from the learner snapshot charts are documented below.

At this stage, students are...

enthusiastic and energetic
still learning the school environment
emotionally dependent on parents
lacking executive function
learning through play
prone to getting sick (and losing teeth)
thinking about themselves

moody
able to move beyond "basics"
numbers, letters
short attention spans

GRADE PK



GRADE 2



At this stage, students need...

to learn routines and transitions (parents too)
space to move around and places to focus
rest periods
bathroom access!
participation by caretakers

more structure (now understand the routine)
to limited distractions to focus
support in writing

- PK-2 paraprofessional support and smaller ratios
- 3-5 help expressing emotions
- 6-8

At this stage, students are...

3rd

able to adjust well to change,
full of energy,
cooperative,
creative,
imaginative,
growing,
funny,
group work lovers,
limited w/ attention
easy to tire

GRADE 3



4th

complainers,
looking for independence,
competitive in groups,
easy to tire,
restless,
worry a lot,
push physical limits,
begin to see bigger world
hard workers
detail oriented

patience from adults,
humor,
encouragement,
movement breaks,
controlled exposure to
big ideas,
topic exploration,
choice
factual explanations

5th

concentrate for longer
amounts of time,
eager for community
opportunities,
cooperative,
moody,
like adult recognition,
concrete thinkers,
growing physically
proud of selves

GRADE 5



movement,
group opportunities
independent time

At this stage, students need...

movement breaks,
group work/activities
structured risk opportunities
repetition
prompting + multiple opp.
space to talk to others
hands on learning

- PK-2
- 3-5
- 6-8

At this stage, students are...

lower effective filter

More interested in heavier/more complex topics

Excited about learning

More able to do group work

GRADE 3



flexible learning spaces →

Visuals for reference

more space to read for longer durations

GRADE 5



At this stage, students need...

More often

Small - grow spaces

- PK-2
- 3-5
- 6-8

At this stage, students are...

- full of energy
- growing quickly
- testing limits

- restless
- brooding, worrying
- navigating big feelings as social dynamics change

- Cooperative
- Social, group-oriented
- becoming leaders
- proud of themselves/work

GRADE 5



GRADE 3



TALKING ABOUT AND EXPLAINING IDEAS

At this stage, students need...

- structures
- space w/in classrooms to move bodies frequently
- play
- smaller chunks of

- humor, lightheartedness
- starting to see/make sense of the larger world they are part of
- opportunities to explore via play

- space & outlets to demonstrate/share knowledge
- access to fine & gross motor tools & space
- opportunities for peer groupings
- choices for play & rest time
↳ academic or social

PK-2 learning and movements

3-5

6-8

At this stage, students are...

Parental/teacher support + approval

want more challenges + ready for next step

GRADE 3



Need a lot of play + movement

wanting to share + collaborate

more self-aware in the larger context

may do better in smaller group

managing conflict resolution

movement! snacks!

working in larger groups (whole class activities)
wanting challenges/competition
hands-on projects
autonomy, ^{and choice} over learning goals/objectives

puberty? caretakers

GRADE 5



At this stage, students need...

SAFE

SPACES

Support & Autonomy

PK-2

3-5

6-8

At this stage, students are...

GROWING INTO SUPPORTED INDEPENDENCE
SPECIALIZING IN INTERESTS
CURIOUS + OPEN TO NEW EXPERIENCES

GRADE 6



GRADE 8



At this stage, students need...

agency choice
opportunity to have experiences connected
to the greater community.

Time
+
space for physical & cognitive
exploration

PK-2

3-5

6-8

At this stage, students are...

Curious
taking risks

Kind and compassionate
but want to fit in

Pushing
boundaries

moody and
energetic

gaining
confidence
developing
SEL

easily influenced

GRADE 6



impulsive

GRADE 8



At this stage, students need...

A sense of belonging

responsiveness

guidance
exposure
direction
clear expectations/
consistency

Challenge and choice

Positive
influences

Developing independence

variety

The ability to process their emotions

PK-2

3-5

6-8

At this stage, students are...

GRADE 6



GRADE 8



At this stage, students need...

- * Agency and personalization and flexibility to choose the space they need.
 - flexible lounge indoor space.
 - Space that allows for reading, movements etc.
 - Interactive learning spaces while also understanding individuality needs.
 - Actual space of the middle school to feel more comfortable. (Cafeteria etc.)

- PK-2
- 3-5
- 6-8

- * Opportunities for students to display their individual work.
- * Curriculum beyond traditional subjects such as woodworking, after school programs, cooking, art etc.
- * Spaces to support students academically without making students excluded/isolated.

As an extension to this work, participants were asked to apply developmental insights to the student experience and the learning environment. Groups considered what a developmentally appropriate day should include across PK-8 and how the building itself must respond to learners at different stages.

Responses from the group charts are documented below. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of times a similar idea was shared.

Question 1:

Given the developmental traits we just named across PK-8, what does a developmentally appropriate daily experience need to include for students across PK-8?

- Opportunities for movement (PK-2 classroom spaces, 6-8 large community spaces) (2)
- Spaces for students to be independent without disrupting other classrooms
- Outdoor spaces for learning (2)
- Sensory spaces (2)
- Breakout spaces for individual / group
- Time for community building and space
- Recess / physical exercise (2)
- Unstructured social time
- Small group work
- Hands-on, experiential learning opportunities
- Opportunities for creativity (art, music, theater)
- Music: general music and instrumental classes in appropriate spaces
- Theatre class and spaces
- Facilities for specialists (2 music, gym, art, PE, library)
- Classroom sensory experiences
- Collaboration indoor and outdoor
- Safety (physical and emotional)
- Structure and flexibility balance
- Middle school experiences beyond general curriculum
- Unique spaces for cohorts
- Safe spaces of intersection between cohorts
- Open and safe public spaces for out-of-school connections. (space for gather: families of young kids and space for older kids to spend time together) (2)
- Experience at school needs to flow naturally
- Welcome space for the community (parents, liaisons, wraparound services, basic needs, language learners) (3)
- Access to space that is flexible and multipurpose
- Appropriate choice opportunities
- Interaction with and throughout grade bands
- Access to food / nutrition
- Play and movement; inside and outside, structured and unstructured (3)
- Sharing / displaying of ideas
- Opportunity to grow within a space
- Quiet space (not to hide, but to manage sensory needs)
- Welcoming environment
- Wellness Support (rest, food access, family support / resources)
- Discourse and collaboration; meaningful, caring interactions
- Routines and expectations; not one size fits all (2)

- Advisory (Grades 6–8)
- Developmentally appropriate classes and spaces (2)
- Challenged in learning
- Choices (2)
- Supported adults to care for kids
- Diverse positive adult role models
- Having one large program (gym, cafeteria) might not work while you combine different grades
- Not ideal to combine PK with higher grades
- Two separate entrances; circulation that allows different grade to move along

Question 2:

Given how learners' needs change from PK through Grade 8, how must the building be designed and organized to accommodate, support, or protect different stages of growth and independence?

- PreK–5 section and 6–8 section
- Opportunities for inclusion
- Cafeteria needs to take into sensory needs of students (i.e. ASD and early childhood)
- Sensory area, bathrooms, teacher work area w/ observation window for ASD classroom
- Sinks in classrooms (2)
- Student storage areas
- Designated safe spot
- Welcome Center
- Bus and parent drop-off spaces
- Developmentally appropriate arrival & dismissal
- Multiple spaces available for movement
- Areas large enough for multi-grade interaction (2)
- Space for flexibility for grade-level teams (2)
- Outside learning opportunities / age-appropriate spaces (in nature) (3)
- Acoustic dampeners
- Age-appropriate bathrooms – PreK-1 (3)
- Dedicated spaces / floors / wings for different grade levels (4)
- Centralized shared spaces for K–8 (gym, cafeteria, specialist spaces, office)
- Dedicated specialist classroom
- Instrumental spaces, especially if multiple classes scheduled at once
- After-school spaces & programming
- Sensory rooms (2)
- Maker space
- Build with safety in mind
- Performance space with access to outside
- Therapy space
- Private bathrooms for AIM throughout
- Room for community resources: clothes, food, parent training
- Life skills spaces: laundry, kitchen etc.
- Separate spaces for all service providers
- Thoughtful planning of spaces like cafeterias where the volume and number of students can be overwhelming and create more chaos / less feelings of safety. More small lunch areas?
- Spaces designed around what is best for kids not efficiency

- Spaces also designed to incorporate AIM and Special Ed; not seeing those as an add-on
- A school within a school; moving into a new space as they progress throughout
- Grouping by grade bands (e.g. PK–2 wing or separate entrance / exit for middle school)
- Central location of specialists (specialist spaces that accommodate diff. developmental stages)
- Access to outdoors is easy for each grade level (e.g. diff play structure for PK–2 vs. others)
- Community space for family events, art shows, PD spaces, conference rooms
- Rooms for interventionists / push in / pull out
- Every flex space is well-equipped
- Spacious, accessible, welcoming main entrance space that is clear and also secure
- Windows / courtyards for outdoor access in winter (e.g. East garden)
- Maybe indoor play + sensory spaces; 2 gyms so one could flex for indoor recess or events
- Age-appropriate playgrounds and spaces
- Separate entrances for different age groups
- Scheduling start / end times apart to avoid foot traffic, etc.
- Drop off time allows flexibility with parents / teacher drop off schedule
- Having kids at the same time for breakfast could be overwhelming
- More flexible space (playground, outdoor)
- Separate entrance but not far apart (Tobin entrance is great example)
- Same dedicated space for parents

Following this activity, participants engaged in a whole-group discussion to reflect on key developmental insights. Their responses are documented below.

- Students must have consistent, equitable access to basic needs, including readily available bathrooms, access to food throughout the day, and spaces that promote physical comfort and well-being.
- Developmental differences across cohorts should be acknowledged and supported without unnecessary separation. The design should allow for age-appropriate experiences while promoting circulation patterns that encourage interaction and community across grade levels.
- Large gathering spaces must be intentionally designed to support social-emotional needs.
- Students should have regular opportunities for choice and cross-grade interaction.
- A Welcome Center should support students and families in meeting basic needs and having access to resources and services.
- Physical needs across a PK–8 span must be thoughtfully addressed. Furniture, fixtures, and shared environments, such as libraries and the cafeteria, should reflect developmental differences in size, comfort, and use.
- Spaces should be designed for students first, not solely for operational efficiency.

- Arrival and dismissal transitions should be supported through intentional spatial design. Natural gathering areas at entrances should ease parent-to-educator hand-offs.
- After-school and extended-day programming require flexible, adaptable environments. Spaces should support community use and evolving needs beyond the traditional school day.
- Library and learning commons spaces should support independent homework and study across all grade levels. Particular attention should be given to intermediate grades (e.g., Grades 4–5), who are often developmentally in-between early childhood and adolescence.
- The Welcome Center should serve as a hub for emotional connection and community building. It should function as a safe space for students seeking support and a welcoming point of engagement for families.
- Outdoor learning must be intentionally integrated even on this compact site.
- The arts, visual art, music, and performing arts, should be centered as essential components of student development. These spaces should be visible, valued, and embedded in the daily life of the school community.

Part 2 – Learning That Sticks

In Part 2, participants reflected on experiences where learning felt meaningful and lasting. Through discussion and shared descriptors, participants articulated core values related to powerful learning, establishing a foundation for the day's work.

Participants' responses have been clustered by category and are documented below.

How We Define Learning

- Processes by which one acquires new skills, knowledge, information, behaviors
 - Experience – hands-on
 - Not just receiving information through lecture
 - The ongoing process and practice of integrating information, making connections, and applying new knowledge in contexts of life, relationships, and academics
 - Moving from not knowing to knowing through diverse methodologies
- including experiences, recall / retell, hands-on, ...
 - Attaining knowledge and skills and being able to apply and use it when I need it (requires awareness and agency)
 - Immersion, observation, experimentation
 - Experience, gaining new perspective, toolkit, expanding capacity
 - Finding out the stuff you need to participate in society

How We Define Success

- Demonstrating a learned skill or applying new knowledge at your own independence level
- Synthesize, application, absorption
- Repeated moments of self-awareness and reflection of the process you've gone through
- The "I did it" feeling

- Application of what you have learned to other life areas
- Being excited to learn more
- Ability to choose what they want to do later
- Knowing my community and myself and being able to engage with my choices and multiple good options; be inspired by and to engage with/ navigate what's next
- Application, retention, authentic tasks, toolkit
- The application of what you have learned freely, independently, confidently
- Pride in figuring it out yourself and trying it (hands-on)
- Financial literacy, shop, home c and being able to use in life
- Sparking interest in knowing more
- Critical thinking skills (evaluating AI, doing without ChatGPT)
- Best you can for yourself
- Realistic expectations (high and attainable)
- Individualized engagement
- Things that don't show up on standardized tests

Part 3 – Teaching & Learning in an “Innovation School”

In Part 3, participants examined what it truly means for Winter Hill Community Innovation School to operate as an innovation school. Through collaborative dialogue, participants explored the teaching and learning experiences that should define daily life at Winter Hill and considered how instructional practices must align with the school's identity and aspirations.

The questions and responses from the collaborative conversations are documented below. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of times a similar idea was shared.

Question 1:

What does it mean to be a PK-8 innovation school at Winter Hill? What core beliefs, values, or commitments should define this school's future identity?

- Project-based, interdisciplinary, arts integration (4)
- Including and honoring student voice (3)
- Community-centered / commitment / partnerships (3)
- Community resource; place for community to come, welcome center / family learning collaborative embedded at every school but here first (2)
- Inclusive and safe (2)
- Teach the whole child (2)
- Taking core assets / values and push along (2)
- School needs freedom to have things other schools may not have
- Place where ideas are tried and exported to other schools and place where other schools / cohorts come for some unique opportunities
- Inclusiveness and safe harbor – where team is built to make that possible
- Experimenting with how to celebrate student growth; not “standard” definition of success in a classroom, thinking about ESL, AIM, neurodiversity
- Inspirational
- Learning-centered

- Using latest educational tools
- Model school
- Interactive / hands-on
- Stay “Winter Hill”
- Wrap around services (community schools)
- Appropriate SEL staff that meets the student need
- Independence
- ROAR (respect, ownership, be accepting, be ready)
- Adaptive
- Unique programming to bring community together
- STEM for forward thinking and life skills
- Being open to being different
- Creativity to play
- Autonomy with choices in our building to meet diverse needs
- See our students as academics with high expectations and opportunities for belonging
- Expectations are developmentally appropriate; meeting kids where they are
- Everyone comes together to support students across programs
- Opportunities for experiential learning
- Environment for social-emotional support, embedded
- Ability to have flexibility with curriculum
- Collaborative leadership integrating educators’ voices
- Student diversity
- Broader academic development ranges / stages
- Everyone belongs / is welcome
- All students can learn and deserve to learn at high level
- Teaching causes learning; what we do in the classroom matters)
- Innovation; constantly doing new things
- “Special” / unique; you choose this school because of it
- Sustainable building that builds into the extracurriculars
- Inter / intra community
- Living labs; real life technology business connection
- Historic connection to neighborhood community
- Greater teacher to student
- Broader teaching methods for a range of learners
- Centrally located so opportunity to be a community hub
- Opportunity to build for younger / smaller people

Question 2:

What specific programs, opportunities, or ways of working should we intentionally expand, strengthen, or introduce to bring that identity to life?

- Living lab; partnerships with community businesses (3)
- More outdoor-based learning and play space (2)
- Scheduling not dictated by space; i.e. normal lunchtimes (2)
- Engineering lab / makerspace (2)
- Interdisciplinary classrooms
- Opportunities to explore curriculum to engage differently
- Welcome center / embedding service
- Geographically central; would be great to center district-wide programs here
- Vocational / restaurants
- Inside / outside gardening
- Farm to table cooking

- Making
- Theme out a semester (let kids have some choice)
- Networking activities
- PTA potluck “cultural innovation”
- Reading buddy group 8th graders
- Live drawing session
- AIM program experiences (adapting)
- Theater / enough capacity for all
- Girls on the Run (movement)
- Dance
- Interactive sensory hallways
- Educational gauntlet
- Sensory space
- Rooms with softer lighting, music, all kids inclusive
- Protecting and expanding AIM program – proper supports and resources
- Integrating newcomer into the middle school
- Expand specialist programming and creating robust courses that meet diverse and developmental needs
- Opportunities for academic choices – math courses / topic
- Create middle school experience; what is the change that happens?
- Spanish class offering
- Supporting wrap around services; anticipate out of school hours
- More OST with appropriate space with equitable enrollment for all
- Intentional, specialized program space
- More than one play space; equitable for all kids
- Sensory room in a quiet space
- Designing classrooms for more than one adult educator
- Carefully arranging teams
- Integration of all communities
- Life skills / resources
- Kitchen classroom
- Central location for community (Adult Ed. and support)
- Expanded student voice and student council
- Options for larger blocks
- Options for alternative lunch areas
- More before and after school programming
- Project-based learning
- Building critical thinking
- Teacher support; PD to learn / do this
- Life skills – home economics, cooking / sewing, financial literacy – driven by community partners
- Balance existing assets and incorporate broader needs
- Move to more co-teaching model to address wider student needs
- Increase inclusion of Special Education
- Hands-on and creative learning opportunities
- Spaces for collaboration
- Programming that crosses boundaries
- Importance of music, art, theatre, creative arts, and expansion
- Multiple spaces for the arts so classes can be concurrent and address different ability levels
- Restorative justice

Question 3:

How should Winter Hill intentionally support adult innovation and learning, both for educators inside the school and for families, partners, and the broader community?

- Welcome Center for families (resources, clothing) (4)
- Common planning space for educators (4)
- Modeling / PD on using features of new school (2)
- Performance making spaces large enough for families (2)
- Time for educator innovation and planning (2)
- Build on educator strengths and skills to support student learning, interdisciplinary (2)
- Space for training (2)
- Evening spaces; learning with and long with kids
- Conference room / flex space for district and community use
- Need after school plus teacher / district planning / meetings
- Outdoor spaces; roof use
- Kitchen for community / non-cafeteria use
- Time for purpose training
- 115 Sycamore is centered – can it be a city hub for adults
- Defining innovation
- More flexibility as adult learner
- Appropriate staffing
- Space to accommodate all four seasons
- Extending the school day for more innovation
- Move SCALE to Winter Hill
- Weekend programs
- Promote the innovation between educators and others across the district
- Opportunities for structured co-teaching
- Adult community education; art, music
- Financial literacy learning
- ESL classes for adults
- Mental health resources
- Food resources for community
- Intentional outreach to raise awareness of programming
- Chance for educators to observe and learn with colleagues
- Partnership with PST
- Build a network of experts that teachers can reach out to
- Working with community partners PDs
- Community Center during school and out of school time
- Adult learning
- Lunch and break area for educators
- Accessible to community
- Beginning of the day / parents congregate
- Physically dividable; can the library be open to the community, access to liaison, community center
- Balance welcome with security
- Smaller secure spaces to play
- Staff work rooms

Working in small groups, participants synthesized major themes from the conversations as documented above and developed guiding educational principles for the building project. Dot polling was then used to identify the principles most critical to the building project and guiding future planning.

The guiding educational principles are documented below. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of dot votes received.

- To truly operate as a PK-8 Innovation School, we believe WHCIS should create upper and lower schools that allow for each school to focus on the development needs of elementary (lower) and middle (upper) school students. This includes: (34)
 - Flexible start / end times
 - OST programming
 - Independent schedules driven by student developmental needs
 - Shared community spaces
 - Welcome center
 - Separate entrances / procedures / expectations
 - Middle school team model
 - Inclusive / accommodating of specialized programs (I.e. AIM) and ML programs (I.e. newcomers)
 - Classroom spaces with built in sensory needs, work space, community space, enough storage to create a calm / uncluttered environment
 - Flexible spaces for small group interventions, SEL, projects that are easily accessible (not walking across whole building)
 - Specialized programs have classrooms designed for student need (I.e. bathroom, sensory, separate teacher space, etc.)
 - Outdoor classrooms
 - Developmentally appropriate playgrounds
- To truly operate as a PK-8 Innovation School, we believe Winter Hill should support a whole community model and create an exploratory experience for every school community member – staff, students, families. (27)
 - Attract students to unique programs
 - Attract community to shared spaces
 - Attract families to after school hours / programs and spaces
 - Facilitate more parental / family engagement
- To truly operate as a PK-8 Innovation School, we believe Winter Hill should pursue project-based learning that fosters collaboration guided by community engagement. (19)
- To be a K-8 innovation community –flexible, multiuse spaces that are personalized; community hubs (PK-8 learners, educators WH and SPS PD hub) that promotes interaction and collaboration; align staffing and expertise, support for innovation (attract and retain educator talent) to foster learning and engagement; students and teachers immersed in a learning culture and community; experiential, hands-on (in and beyond classrooms); pride and shared ownership (space and learning); inclusive and restorative community (14)
- To truly operate as a PK-8 Innovation School, Winter Hill should be adaptable (throughout the building, not only space but learning, too), accessible (physically, socially, linguistically, community space), focused on the whole child and diversity of students (music, drama, art, movement) so

that every child feels successful and wants to come to school, all specialized programs valued and not isolated, all students reflected in programming, space, and collaborations. (13)

- To truly operate as a PK-8 Innovation School, Winter Hill should be anchored in nurturing the whole child, and should celebrate our diversity so that every child feels successful and a sense of belonging. (12)
- A collaborative community space for people of all ages to come together and learn (12)
 - Professional development
 - Flexibility to do things differently (ability to choose your interest)
 - Project-based learning / student-centered approach
- To truly operate as a PK-8 Innovation School, we believe Winter Hill should meet the needs of students throughout different life stages (play, safety, structure, choices, autonomy). (10)
- Most authentic inclusion of all students (7)
 - MLE, SPED, advanced learners, etc.
 - Meeting needs of all students
- To truly operate as a PK-8 Innovation School, we believe Winter Hill should be a place people want to be; a place that goes beyond academic learning. (5)
- To truly operate as a PK-8 Innovation School, we believe Winter Hill should prioritize flexibility as it relates to schedule / logistics and teaching / instruction. (2)
- Expand yearning (2)
 - Include integrated social-emotional, experiential, hands-on, movement, creative arts
- Community
 - Collaboration – students, educators, and leadership

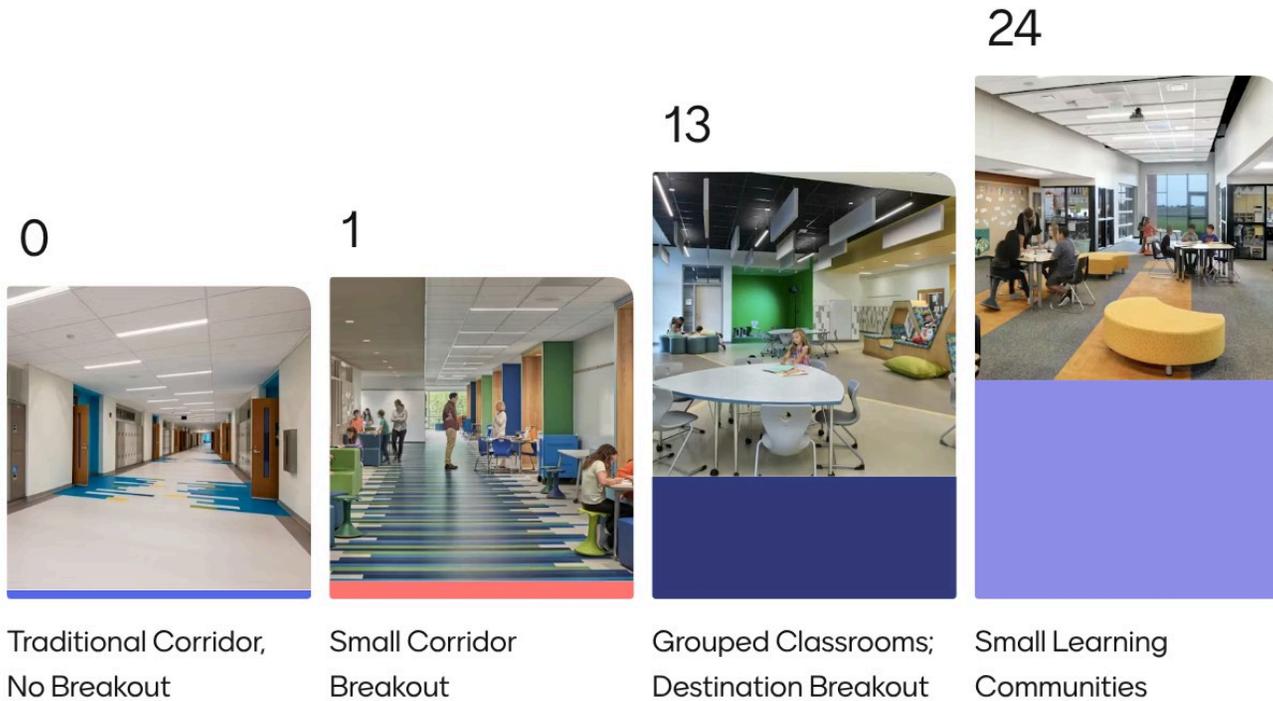
Part 4 – Learning Environments in Action

In Part 4, participants explored a range of learning environments and reflected on the experiences these spaces could support. Through live polling via Mentimeter and discussion, participants identified patterns across environments and considered what shifts would be required to make these spaces successful at Winter Hill. Participants' responses are documented in the pages that follow.

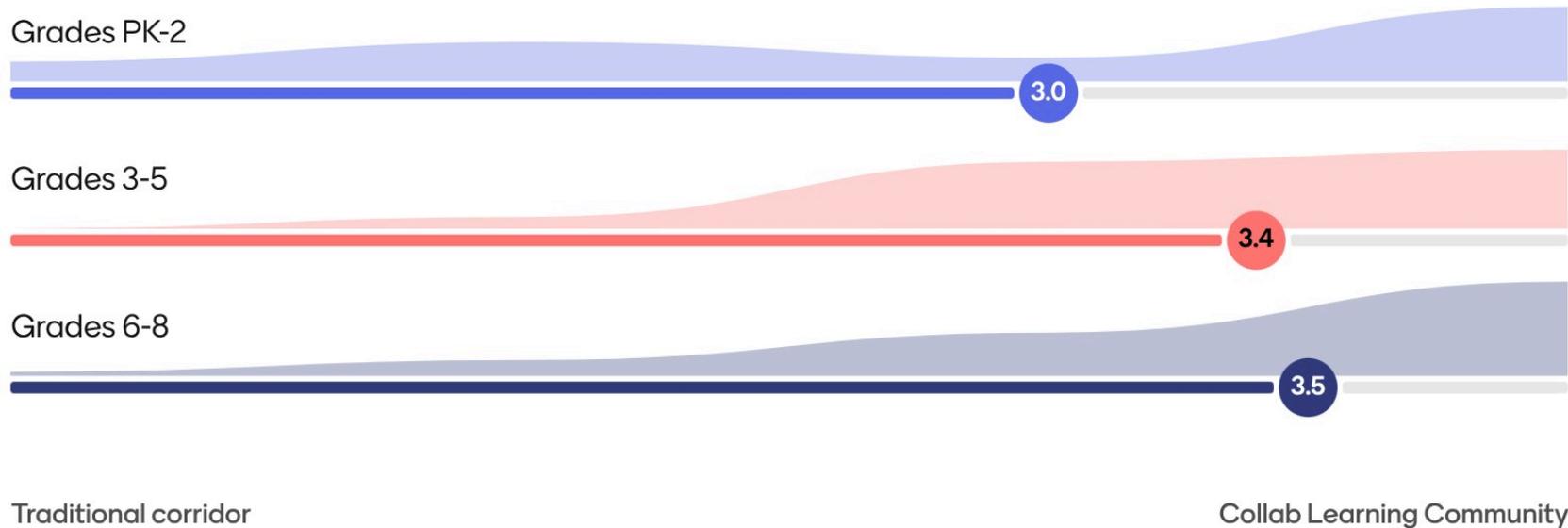
BUILDING ORGANIZATION



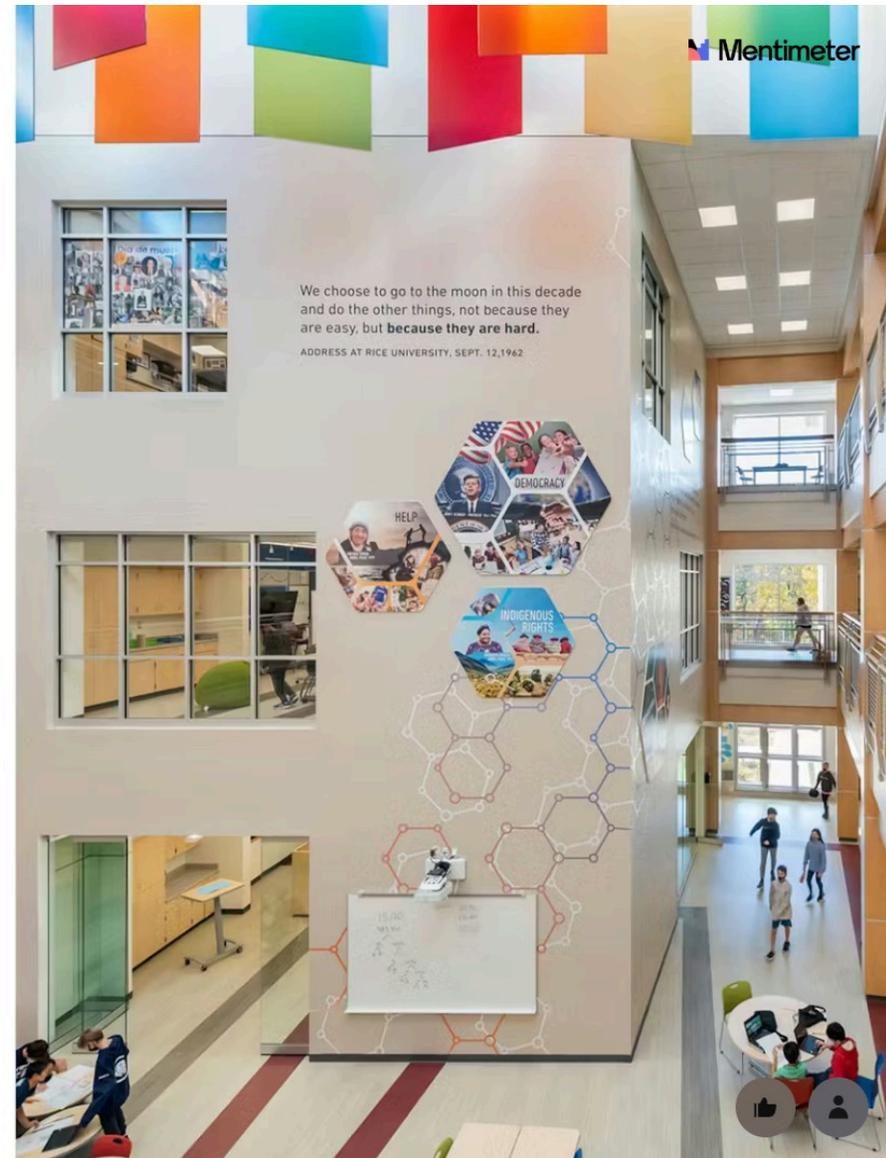
Which level of building organization feels right for Somerville students?



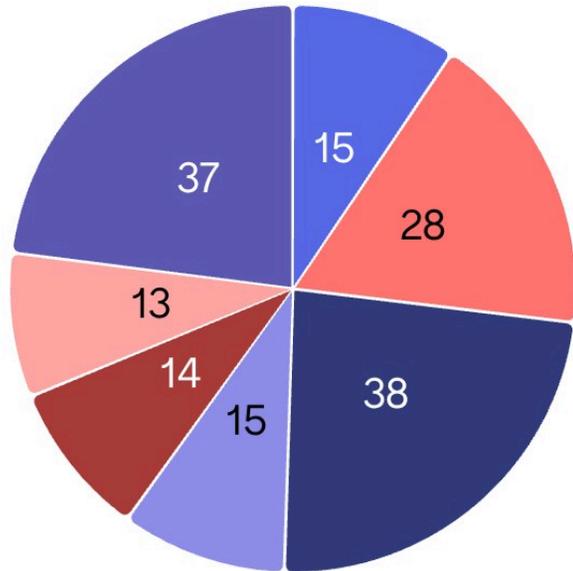
What is most developmentally appropriate for each grade span?



COLLABORATION + INTERACTION

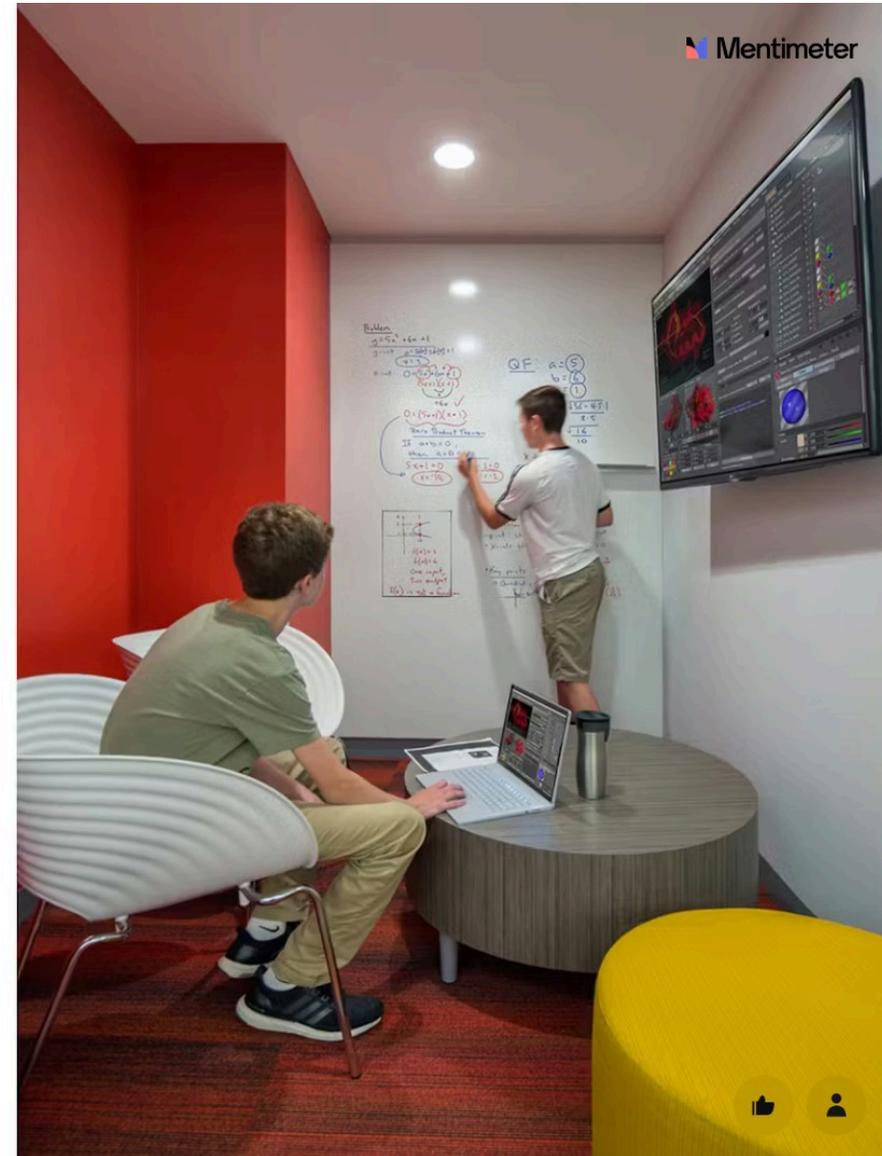


What should collaboration & interaction spaces make possible? Pick 4.



- 15 Strong grade level identity & belonging
- 28 Easier collaboration among teachers
- 38 More movement & flexibility
- 15 Visible access to supports
- 14 Ability to share students across same grade classes
- 13 Cross-grade collaboration
- 37 Flexible spaces for small group and peer learning

SMALL GROUP COLLABORATION



What specific student experiences can we support with quiet, focused, or smaller spaces and why?

Opportunities for introverted kids to be leaders.

Group work on a project
Time for students to discuss

Intervention and other service providing work.

Ability to focus

Discussions on class topics, other group work.

Interventionists and supports, particularly for addressing differentiated classrooms. Especially in the early grades.

Craft and science projects.
Be exposed in a classroom then try it out in this space.

A student who is testing and needs a quieter space to do that. A student who just need a break from someone or something.



What specific student experiences can we support with quiet, focused, or smaller spaces and why?

Reading - less distraction reboot time

A student being able to calm themselves, have a separate conversation with a teacher, get more specialized learning.

Lunch area for sensory sensitive students, focus rooms.

Small group work and educational supports with a specialist. Spaces for kids who need a break from high sensory input areas. Stations for exploratory play for younger kids.

1:1 and small groups, especially time with counselors where privacy might be needed
Focused independent learning for students who need it

Group Project based learning that allows a group to focus on the task at hand

Pull out for special ed/ml, small group work, space for students to work away from others if they need uninterrupted work

Students who are ready to flex muscle if independence can self guide small group
Students with sensory overload can take a break while continuing to learn



What specific student experiences can we support with quiet, focused, or smaller spaces and why?

Project based learning
Student discourse Students
having autonomy on
learning less teacher
directed more student
centered

Kids developing close
friendships by having time
to have close personal
conversations in a quiet
space.

Social Emotional Learning,
hands-on activity, students
recording a video, etc.

Intervention space for rr
support or esl support without
auditory distractions from the
larger classroom, opportunities
for flexible groupings with less
time spent transitioning, quieter
sensory space

I would love for these smaller
group shared spaces to be
used for intervention and limit
transitions to and from
classroom. I also think it would
be useful for co-teaching.

Pull out SPED services.

Pullout services, redirection,
quiet "break" space,
independent small group
work

Students having a
behavioral issue will have a
space to vent and calm
down



What specific student experiences can we support with quiet, focused, or smaller spaces and why?

We can support student inclusion and collaboration with service providers

Intervention, project work, SEL, extension work, discussions

Opportunities for pull out, self-regulation, peer interactions, project based learning.

Space for students to do group work

Students who need more individualized support, less distractions and small group

smaller group projects where kids have a chance to be more themselves

Opportunities for students of all programs to come together

Special ed and interventionists pull-outs so they can be more integrated with the gen ed classroom. Teachers can communicate quickly and informally.



What specific student experiences can we support with quiet, focused, or smaller spaces and why?

Neurodivergent kids need reduced sensory experience/distractions.

One on one teacher/student sessions

Older kids benefit from focused, small group work to collaborate.

Pre K to 5. For upper grades hormonal challenges interfere.

Enrichment activities

Kids who need to be regulated, Kids with Autism or attention deficit disorder
Kids with language barriers

Inclusion and offering targeted supports to small groups with kids both in general ed and on IEPs or 504sz (less calling out of need for supports)

movement and diversity in the day



What specific student experiences can we support with quiet, focused, or smaller spaces and why?

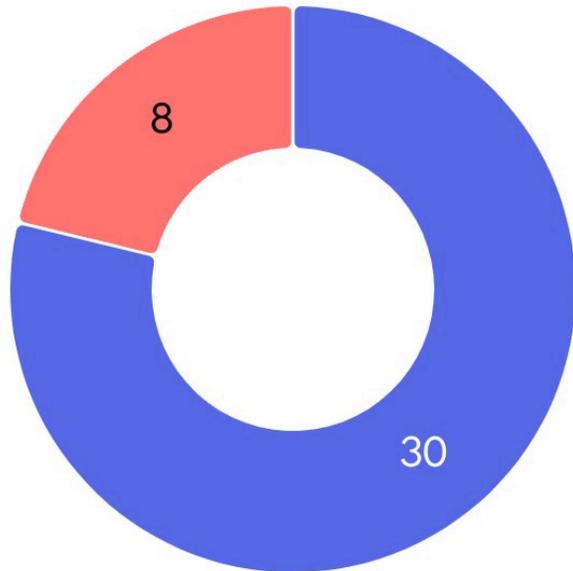
Independent reading, studying/classwork. Small group intervention between teachers & students or small group work. This model should allow for more types of students to shine and provide more on ramps

The ability to be able to take space if needed

Book groups, literature circles
Advisory Grade level meeting
Team building games
Restorative practice/
community circles Student
work exhibitions



How essential are smaller, focused learning and student support spaces to daily teaching and learning at Winter Hill?

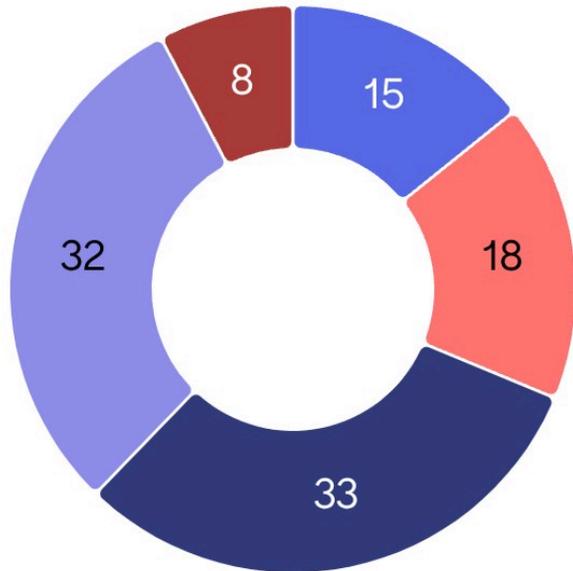


- 30 Essential & frequently needed – integrate throughout academic areas, between or near classrooms for max access
- 8 Important but used more selectively – a limited number per academic area is sufficient
- 0 Occasionally useful – one or two centralized support areas can meet the need
- 0 Not essential – flexible classrooms can meet most needs

CONNECTIONS TO CORE LEARNING



What's most important about how creation and exploration spaces connect to classroom learning? Pick 3.



- 15 They should be connected and visible to classrooms so learning flows easily between them.
- 18 They should be shared and flexible, used by different grades or programs for hands-on, creative work.
- 33 They should be collaborative, allowing teachers and specialists to co-teach or plan together.
- 32 They should be integrated and student-centered, supporting curiosity, making, and problem-solving.
- 8 They should also serve as community assets and not spatially connected to academics.

What new hands-on experiences or specials should we consider adding to support innovation and student choice?

Maker space

Shop

Theater programming in
K8

Spaces to practice daily
living skills for students to
build independence

Vocational areas

More choices for
specialists

Culinary Arts

Gardening -- getting hands
into the dirt, interacting with
growing plants.

What new hands-on experiences or specials should we consider adding to support innovation and student choice?

Creating opportunity for kids to be involved in how/where they learn

Life skills

Robotics, culinary, wood shop

Financial literacy, eg. "Bank"

Life skills- CTE- gardening

Student led specialists

Community activities (visiting work sites, stores, etc)

Technology related such as makers space etc.

What new hands-on experiences or specials should we consider adding to support innovation and student choice?

Outdoor education & classroom

More STEM opportunities and maker space areas.

vocational areas, and creativity

A maker space or engineering design lab that is highly flexible and usable by a wide range of grade levels for exploration or structured projects

Bridge to CTE... culinary, shop, graphic design, TV production, sewing/knitting

Expand upon the existing theater program, also encourage more STEM programming

Digital literacy, computer science, real science labs

Maker space

What new hands-on experiences or specials should we consider adding to support innovation and student choice?

Life skills: sewing, cooking

Spaces for students to explore and learn new skills

Stem , gardening, climate awareness

Life skills for all kids (home ec, money skills)

Robotics which has been really popular in our school and has been a great place for inclusion across programs. Designated practice spaces for instrument program in grades 4+

Electives in middle grades that reflect the opportunities students will have in high school. Such as a shop class, cooking, etc.

Life skills Shop STEM collaboration across grade levels

Music Technology

What new hands-on experiences or specials should we consider adding to support innovation and student choice?

Shop/woodworking, engineering, cooking/home ec (including life skills/crafts like sewing, knitting)

We should give possible introduction to the things offered at shs More choice of specialist classes

Wood shop

Interdisciplinary project-based learning (which will require some curricular flexibility-how can it work with curriculum programs)

Project display.

EDUCATIONAL WELLNESS & BELONGING



What space types or design features should we include to help students find calm, make choices, and belong?

Soundproofing

The flag wall!

Flags or countries

Indoor gym

Integrated quiet corners

sensory experiences
throughout the school

Acoustic tile everywhere

Sensory experience
throughout

What space types or design features should we include to help students find calm, make choices, and belong?

Previous question: enough music rooms for general music and instrumental music to happen in separate spaces simultaneously

Unique opportunities for lunch seating.

Outdoor/nature access other than playground

sensory experiences throughout the school, different options for lunch,

Indoor gym space options

Smaller lunch groups

Sensory spaces across the school

Cave experiences, love the flag idea especially for Newcomer Academy

What space types or design features should we include to help students find calm, make choices, and belong?

Interactive spaces could be technology tablet, etc.

Ways for students to engage with sensory experiences as they go between classes, breaks or transition

Greenspace

I think we need to be very mindful of the cafeteria that it's inclusive. We don't want to segregate certain groups of students.

Sensory/movement spaces

Different lunch settings

Small spaces with books

Indoor recess opportunities

What space types or design features should we include to help students find calm, make choices, and belong?

We need sensory rooms for all grades, visual reminders of belonging and school values, as well as seeing themselves in the space.

Sensory experiences throughout, different lunch opportunities, areas on walls in hallways where students see and choose their work to be displayed there, inclusive messaging with access to resources

Gardening walkway space to meditate or think

quiet spaces
soundproofed rooms/walls

Alternative lunch areas, sensory experiences for students, love the flag wall to contribute to the importance of identify and feeling welcomed and a part of their community

Bicycle parking, encouraging cycling

Small sensory rooms as well as a larger space for adaptive PE classes. I like the tactile walls as well.

Variety Opportunities for interaction with the space
Spaced that encourage connection Proximity to the outside

What space types or design features should we include to help students find calm, make choices, and belong?

spaces to look outside

Flag wall was great

Sensory spaces of all kinds and throughout the building, especially if they can be visible to classroom teachers.

Sensory spaces and cave-like ones in all learning communities. Multiple cafe options, indoor play structures

Flexible lunch spaces, comfortable seating in calming areas, genuine opportunities to have their identity and work represented

The flag wall

Variety of small and large that can be planned and programmed to accommodate the student population

Nooks! Love multi use stairs/steps (for belonging, sitting w a friend, and more)

What space types or design features should we include to help students find calm, make choices, and belong?

Opportunities for lunch, student artwork, inclusion features like the flags.

Calm, quiet room

More opportunities to eat lunch besides a structured cafeteria. Sensory areas to help Students regulate

Little nooks for reading breaks Multiple stations on common space to make choices

Sensory spaces through out but also a designated space as well

Dim lighting

COMMUNITY RESOURCE



What kinds of events, programs, or partnerships could happen here that would strengthen connections between school and the wider community?

Cultural nights

Teen center welcome center

Wrap around community center

Mentorships with students and local leaders

School plays

Business connections

Music concerts

Community collaboration with different groups and organizations both public and private.

What kinds of events, programs, or partnerships could happen here that would strengthen connections between school and the wider community?

concerts

Library bilingual

Parent support groups in multiple languages

Welcome center/hub for immigrants

Library that's open to the public on weekends and evenings

Cultural nights

Playground space for families to gather after school

Meals PBL w/family involvement

What kinds of events, programs, or partnerships could happen here that would strengthen connections between school and the wider community?

potluck events

Bring local businesses into the school for a day workshops/coop

Gather more community input

Family welcome center Performances Collabs with community innovators

Music concerts

Technology studios by local tech cos.

Academic showcases, wrap around services for community members, adult education

More accessible, centralized MS sports and clubs

What kinds of events, programs, or partnerships could happen here that would strengthen connections between school and the wider community?

Night and weekend rec programming simultaneous with adult ed

After school clubs- students from around the community come here

Music performance space, family resource center with gathering space for families to meet and connect (could be in gardens, etc)

Love the welcome center idea!!!

Regular seminars on various topics targeting a wide audience.

Host PD for other SPS staff, a place were parents can meet and be part of the community

Community center, food and clothing pick up area, cultural events

Adult learning opportunities, events that allow people outside of our school community to feel included, really help strengthen the family connections with events, etc

What kinds of events, programs, or partnerships could happen here that would strengthen connections between school and the wider community?

Performance space for school /community performances

having an open welcoming building that allows others to feel like they can use it

Adult classes (academic, helpful life skills, and just for fun). Arts events, middle school dances.

Family center, community meeting spaces, community events, performances, open after hours with staff

Open indoor recreation spaces. All our current school gyms are closed to the community for free play.

Evening classes and events for school and broader community

After school programs, speaker events, concerts, fundraisers, talent shows

If we have those specialized spaces like culinary or stem can have nights/events related to that

What kinds of events, programs, or partnerships could happen here that would strengthen connections between school and the wider community?

Public meeting space

Toy drives, thanksgiving dinner handouts, clothing store, English class,

Adult Education programs (learn guitar, cooking, yoga, etc) See Cambridge/Arlington programs.

Welcome center

Concerts, theatrical performances, moving on ceremonies, kindergarten graduation

Have spaces available immediately after school for families and kids to spend time together. Have spaces for smaller groups to reserve that can't be booked every week like soccer leagues...

Offering ESL programs for parents/ guardians .

Partnerships with local business, between SPS schools, local universities

What kinds of events, programs, or partnerships could happen here that would strengthen connections between school and the wider community?

Music concerts, Theatre performances, after school spacing and programming, partnerships with local instrument shops and theatres for partnerships

Concerts, performances and workshops from local musicians and artists.

The wider community being able to use non-classroom collaborative spaces for adult education, community meetings, afterschool, and summer camps for kids would make the new school a city asset

Family / adult wd

Welcoming entrance with school -community uses (necessities store near entrance, for ex), gathering spaces, rooftop utilization/ access (garden or pool)

Open gym

Assemblies, events, concerts, pot luck, theme nights (movies, World Cup, etc)

Community building, partnerships with community businesses. Music and performance occasions. Bicycle repair clinics, visiting artists, lectures, etc.

Part 5 – Closing Reflection

In Part 5, participants concluded the sessions by reflecting on beliefs, values, and priorities they hope will guide the future Winter Hill Community Innovation School. The collective beliefs, values, and priorities are documented below.

- Belonging
- Everyone is welcomed and supported
- Care for the overall well-being of the community
- Whole child supports and learning to spark curiosity and lifelong learning and engagement
- Keeping a collaborative, inclusive community so everyone can thrive
- Somerville teachers can do amazing things with enough support
- Inclusivity that is visible everywhere
- As soon as possible
- Middle school expansion
- I believe inclusiveness and community are essential
- Belonging; meeting diverse developmental needs of all students
- Creating a school where everyone feels like it is their community and that they belong
- Whole welcome community
- The needs and values of the community the school serves
- Make it clear we didn't cut corners on this unique chance of an opportunity
- Respect for differences and Welcome Center for play groups
- A sense of belonging and celebration of diversity
- Learner-centered; inclusive community of belonging and learning
- Inclusivity of all students' developmental needs
- Inclusive, adaptive, and welcoming for all
- Flexible spaces / groupings
- All students can and deserve to have high quality education and expectations
- All students are welcome
- Sense of belonging
- Collaboration and support for ALL students with high expectations'
- Flexibility and openness to new ideas
- Community. Involvement
- That students have such diverse needs and interests and our new school should celebrate and nurture that
- Caring about each child as a whole person, both individually and communally
- Student-centered
- Community (belonging to and accountable to)
- Collaboration
- Inclusion
- Belonging
- Nurturing the whole child
- A sense of community and place
- A place for kids to be themselves
- Community and values-based principles will guide the effort to best serve our children
- A new school that embodies innovating learning for all kids and the entire Winter Hill school community

APPENDIX

Sign-in Sheets

Winter Hill Community Innovation School Sign-In Sheets



Launch & Priority Mapping Session – 11.14.25

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Winter Hill Community Innovation School Sign-In Sheets



Visioning 1 Session – 01.20.26

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Winter Hill Community Innovation School Sign-In Sheets



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Winter Hill Community Innovation School Sign-In Sheets



Program Workshop 1 Session – 12.10.25

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Winter Hill Community Innovation School Sign-In Sheets



Program Workshop 2 Session – 02.12.26

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Visioning Session Meeting Observations

WHCIS - VISIONING SESSION MEETING OBSERVATIONS

During the January 20, 2026 Visioning Session, members from Perkins Eastman documented participants' responses during small- and whole group conversations. The notes below capture what was discussed to supplement the written and online responses collected from participants during the session.

Welcoming/Overview - Mike and Paul

Understanding the Learner:

Community Comments

1. Middle School Students need movement and responsibility to make choices
2. Community Q: Doesn't the city and state dictate what the curriculum is - A: yes, but how it is taught is up to the teacher (teachers can team teach a subject or use project-based learning)

Group exercise:

Learner snap shot - changes that students will go through from grade to grade (what they are and what they need developmentally)

P-K to 2

- How to address parents struggle with transition
- Kindergarten students need confidence when learning to read
- Achieving goals
- Student to teacher ratio
- Young students need a larger space to move around and engage in activities
- Kindergartens students are creative, need to keep creativity as they grow

3-5

- Can work in groups but sometimes it is hard for them to stay focused
- Need comfortable reading space (5th graders can read alone for longer)
- Space for independent learning
- 4th grader group learning can build independence
- 4th graders need structure
- Advanced technology for connection to the outside world and for creativity

6-8

- 6th-8th grade - growth and maturity
- Community service - 7/8th graders can get involved in community service on their own
- Lunch time space: space can be loud, need some quiet areas for students to eat and be comfortable
- Want to be treated like individuals - be recognized
- Open to new experience
- Need for exposure

Open Discussion - Comments on Questions:

- P-K needs a safe space - need to feel safe when they leave their parents
- Drop off - if staggered drop off times are used how do families from further away drop off students of multiple ages
- Cafeteria is loud - how do you make a safe space feel in a large area
- Opportunity for choices and diversity
- Create a welcome center to help both children and parents (resources, basic needs, interactions, and a place for parents to connect with other families)
- Shared Art rooms could be problematic due to multiple size students from P-K through 8th grade age groups (grades have different needs and requirements)
- Need separate entrances for elementary and MS (younger students need time to say bye and older students need a passage to run into school)
- A building where people feel safe throughout the day (from morning to after school programs and nighttime/weekend community use)
- Middle aged kids 4th - 6th grade need a place to go and do homework - Could be at the welcome center/community space
- Partnerships with community business (inside the school) can be in a community space
- Outdoor learning space needs greater access
- Music and art need to be accessible for all

When learning really stuck

- Ability to go out of bounds and try new things
- Success is being able to use what you learned
- Observations that helped people change and develop
- Ongoing learning and practice to better ones' experience
- Learning is experiential and hands on

Around the world

1. Values of a PK through 8 School
2. What programs highlight the identity
3. How should it support adult education and learning

Values:

- Create spaces for upper and lower school spaces
- Experiential hands learning on in and beyond classrooms
- Anchored in diversity
- Authentic involvement of all students
- Attract students to after school programs and families

Spaces:

- Choices - use of space and time
- Need professional development time with teachers to show them how to use learning spaces
- Connection to core learning - areas for students to expand their learning

Additional WHCIS Visioning Notes:

Question asked: What ways could classes be held that you would want to see in the new school?

- The class structure could be used to determine an optimal layout to reflect the nature of the learning
- Ways of organization
 - Spatial
 - Class structure/schedule
 - Grouping students together (maybe inter-class) who do well in small groups
 - Providing typical class structures for students who are more reserved, who do well in class settings
- Movement
 - Kids needing some sort of physical outlet
 - Peer interaction
 - Physical outlets
 - Appealing to different types of students
 - Movement between classes, and student groups (not stationary groups)
- Consistency
 - Finding consistency in organization/class schedules to allow flexibility, but these changes are spontaneous or unexpected

Question asked: Significant amount of changes happen through grade and age groups, what can learning do to help?

- Different space accommodations for the different grade levels
- Personal growth (self control)
- Changes in activity level
- Potential changes in support (teacher/parent)
- Testing limits
 - Growing to age of legit test-taking or test taking challenges
- Changes in learning routines
- Agency and Choice
 - Freedom and independence
 - Exposure to experiences, how to manage this new freedom
- Social/Emotional Development
 - Learning has opportunity for peer groupings
 - Learning style – Hands on work vs. Classroom work
 - Having objectives
 - Movement in class a – collaboration

Q1 Given the developmental discussion, what are the daily experiences to support them?

Q2 Given identifiers from Q1, how should the building be designed to support?

Q1 answers reiterated the changes mentioned before

Q2:

- Grade separation – Different wings
- Classroom space that accommodates flexibility and movement
- Communal gathering spaces
- Elective classrooms from higher grades
- Centralized communal spaces – Gym, Caf, Aud.
- Appropriate counseling spaces
- Access to outdoor space – natural lighting
- Not a big "block of kids" - separations that foster small communities
- Breakout rooms within classrooms
- Community art engagement
- Sensory rooms
- Adequate parent drop off/pick up space
- Why is the lunch room the only main gathering space?

Question asked: When did learning really stick? What made it so powerful?

*2 definitions

- How do you define learning
- How do you define success

Learning: integration of information, then the application of that information

Success: completing a goal, or an achievement – demonstrating growth and the willingness to improve

Learning can be success, success can demonstrate learning

Question asked: What programs, or opportunities foster the identity of the WHCIS? What does the identity of an innovation school look like?

- Inside/outside learning
- Community hubs

Question asked: How should WH intentionally support for adult innovation? Families, educators, etc.

- After school programs – designated separate spaces
- Professional development spaces
- Separate faculty spaces
- Green space – integrating building in surrounding community/neighborhood
- Adequate drop off/pick up spaces

Question asked: What are the educational principles that should guide the school

- Modular curriculum
- Students having choices in the program
- Focus on collaboration

Question asked: What classroom layout should look like

- Connections between classrooms and centralized collaboration spaces
- Spaces that foster smaller "learning communities."