



Slavens Elementary School

A 2005 Landscape Master Plan for Elementary School Campus Improvements



Prepared For: Denver Public Schools
900 Grant St.
Denver, Colorado

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As part of a course: Finding Common Ground
Exploring the Urban Experience
Fall Semester 2001
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Master Plan For Slavens Elementary School

Prepared For: Denver Public Schools
900 Grant St.
Denver, Colorado

Approved _____, _____
Principal, Edison Elementary date

Approved _____, _____
CDC Representative date

Approved _____, _____
P. M., DPS Facility Management date

Approved _____, _____
Grounds Supervisor, DPS date
Facility Management

Project Introduction

The Challenge

Studies show that a well-planned and equipped exterior play area enhances the learning environment resulting in improved learning and achievement. Such play areas provide physical and mental challenges that translate into improved health and learning attention. Furthermore, with proper design, these areas themselves become outdoor classrooms or learning landscapes. One of the principal secondary goals of all schools, including elementary, is to provide a focus for the community – a place to gather and to meet, a place to enjoy, a place that enhances the community’s appearance. A reflection of this community importance is Denver’s Mayor Wellington Webb’s statement, “As Mayor, I have long recognized that we cannot have a great city and great neighborhoods without great schools.”

Denver Public Schools [DPS] is an urban school district with many of the same challenges of other urban districts. The infrastructure is aging – the average facility is almost 50 years old. The ongoing 1998 General Obligation Bond [GOB] will increase the number of schools to 130 but contains no funding for existing elementary schools or any other existing school playground. Approximately 75 DPS elementary schools require moderate to extensive renovations or upgrades to meet adequate standards. These include replacing playground equipment, providing irrigation and sod [to eliminate gravel and dirt fields], providing American with Disability Act [ADA] accessibility, and providing an outdoor classroom learning environment. Approximately half of the 75 elementary schools are located within underserved neighborhoods. It is in these neighborhoods where transforming the schoolyard is most pressing. These schools have chronic disciplinary problems that are disruptive to a school’s academic environment. Playgrounds lacking appropriate choices for children become arenas to bully and tease. Recess should be a positive experience that compliments their academic development, a place where children develop their emotional, physical and social skills.

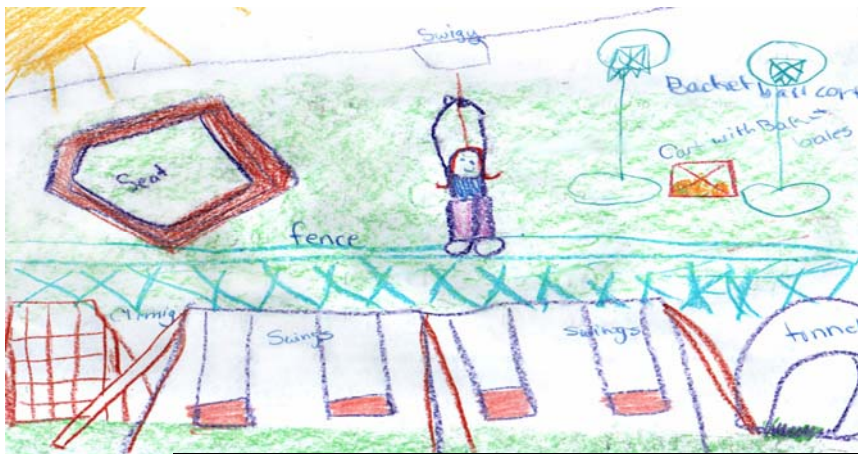




The Solution

The "Learning Landscape" program is an entrepreneurial community-minded alliance of public and private interests that seeks to strengthen Denver Public Schools and their surrounding neighborhoods by designing new multi-dimensional playgrounds and social gathering places. The success of this program is founded on a mutual respect of aesthetic, maintenance, safety, and recreational issues. The University of Colorado at Denver's Landscape Architecture department offers a seminar course called FINDING COMMON GROUND—EXPLORING THE URBAN EXPERIENCE.

Students of landscape architecture, architecture and other disciplines have come together with Professor Lois Brink to research current educational, sociological, and environmental thought regarding urban space in general and elementary school grounds in particular. Each student in the course selects a school from a predetermined pool and uses this knowledge to develop a vision and master plan for each school. The master plan approach will suit a multi-faceted contemporary existence—engaging a child's educational and recreational experience with that of the community at-large.



The Intent of the Master Plan

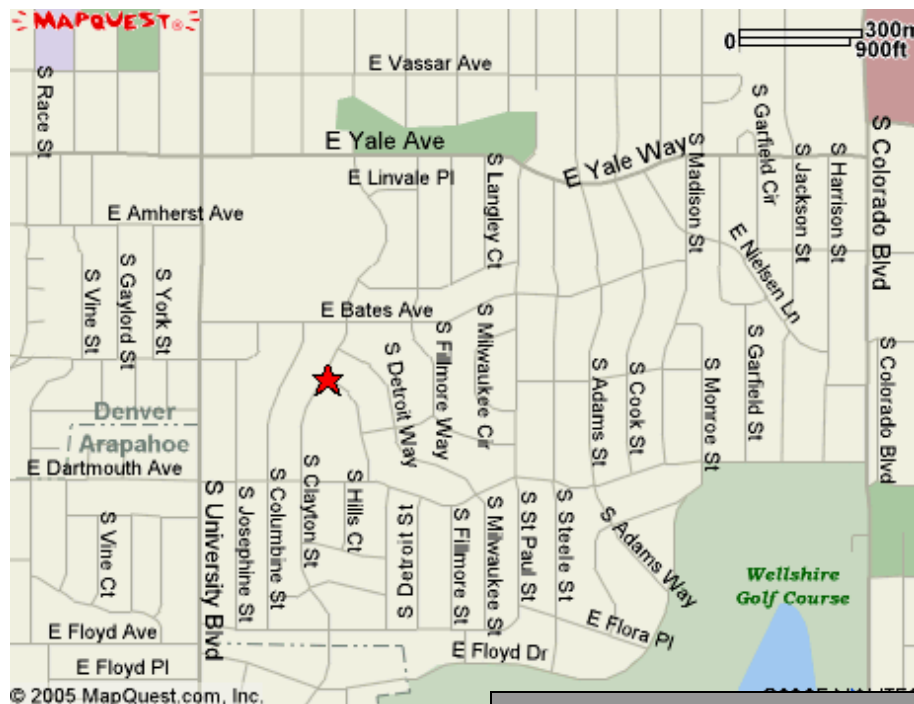
The master plan is a written report and plan that sets forth the structure for future campus improvements. Each school has a vision that speaks to the desires of the school and surrounding community. The vision is further delineated into goals that identify the major goals for implementation. These goals are defined through the use of text and imagery. A programmatic list of uses is also developed. Lastly, each master plan sets forth the aesthetic ordering system or systems that will be used on the design phase to organize the programmatic uses. This plan, once approved, will provide a framework for fund raising and future construction.



PART 1: SITE ASSESSMENT

Section 1: Location

Slavens Elementary is located to the southeast of downtown Denver at 3000 South Clayton St. The major vehicular corridors that surround this area include University Blvd, Colorado Avenue, and Hampden Avenue. There is a lot of community involvement with the school and the neighborhood is rather closely knit for almost all of the students of Slaven's Elementary live in the nearby neighborhoods. The numbers show a healthy mix between young and old and even those who do not have children in the school have shown involvement. Of the 5000 households in the area, there are 1800 people who are under 18, and 1300 people who are over 65 and less likely to have children in the school.

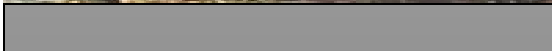


There are a number of amenities in the area that help the community. There are several churches nearby that serve the Baptist, Catholic, and Methodist religions. There is even a seminary just down University Boulevard. There is also a grocery store, two gas stations, a coffee shop, and a couple of specialty shops less than three blocks from the school. The community also hosts a public library, the Wellshire golf course, and a number of community parks.



Section 2: Site History

Slavens Elementary School was constructed in 1956. Twenty-six years later, in 1982, a declining school population caused Slavens to close. After fourteen years of darkened classrooms, the tireless efforts of former students and community members persuaded DPS to reopen Slavens in 1996. The school has been thriving ever since. The school may have been reborn but it still honors the past, there is a plaque at the west entrance that commemorates the founder of the school:



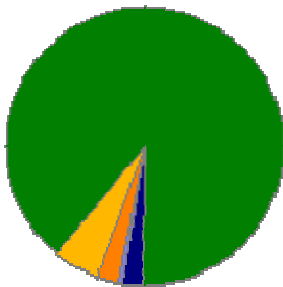
"Mr. Leon E. Slavens, whose gentleness, devotion and duty, and love of children inspired all who knew him. Born February 5, 1894, died October 8, 1954. Teacher and principal in the Denver Public Schools from 1923 to 1953."

Section 3: Demographics of the Community and School

Slaven's Elementary is a K-8 school. The school's rating for the elementary is excellent with stable improvement, while the middle school has a performance grade of high with stable improvement which are among the best for Denver public schools. The school district is located in both the University and Wellshire areas, which are comprised of a largely white population that accounts for 85% of the total population. This area is about rebirth for the school actually closed down in the early 90's and was then reopened by the parents within the community. The numbers show a healthy mix between young and old and even those who do not have children in the school have shown involvement. Of the 5000 households in the area, there are 1800 people who are under 18, and 1300 people who are over 65 and less likely to have children in the school.

The community also has healthy mix financially, for the average household income in the Wellshire community is around \$100,000 which is way above Denver's average, while the average income for the University community is around \$50,000, which is right in line with Denver's income average. The high parental involvement has been considered a major asset for the school's success and compliments the 98% attendance rate which is quite a bit higher then most of the other Denver Public Schools.

Indicators	Slavens School (ECE-8)	All Elementary Schools	School Year
Student Demographics			
% African American Students	2.2	15.6	04/05
% Latino Students	5.7	61.2	04/05
% White Students	89.3	18.9	04/05
% Asian Students	2.4	3.2	04/05
% Native American Students	0.4	1.1	04/05
# of Students	456	37712	04/05
% Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch	1.5	70.3	04/05
% Students English Language Learners - Spanish Speaking	0.2	29.9	04/05
% Students English Language Learners - Other Language	0.2	2.1	04/05
% Students English Language Learners - All Languages	0.5	32.1	04/05
% of Students in the Same School for 3 Consecutive Years	79.5	--	03/04
Daily Attendance Rate	95.8	--	03/04



Student Demographics

Ethnicity	This School
African American	2.5%
American Indian	0.4%
Asian	2.5%
Hispanic	5.4%
White	89.1%



Section 4: The Constituents

The Students

CSAP Performance			
<u>School Accountability Rating</u>	Excellent	--	03/04
<u>Improvement Rating</u>	--	--	03/04
OVERALL CSAP SCORES	Slavens	Other Schools	
<u>CSAP 3rd Grade Reading Test - % Proficient or Advanced</u>	86.8	53.5	03/04
<u>CSAP 3rd Grade Writing Test - % Proficient or Advanced</u>	56.6	31.9	03/04
<u>CSAP 4th Grade Reading Test - % Proficient or Advanced</u>	90.6	37.8	03/04
<u>CSAP 4th Grade Writing Test - % Proficient or Advanced</u>	77.4	28	03/04
<u>CSAP 5th Grade Math Test - % Proficient or Advanced</u>	90	35.2	03/04
<u>CSAP 5th Grade Reading Test - % Proficient or Advanced</u>	94	45.5	03/04
<u>CSAP 5th Grade Writing Test - % Proficient or Advanced</u>	84	33.1	03/04
<u>CSAP 6th Grade Reading Test - % Proficient or Advanced</u>	89.8	38.1	03/04
<u>CSAP 6th Grade Writing Test - % Proficient or Advanced</u>	83.7	31.9	03/04
<u>CSAP 6th Grade Math Test - % Proficient or Advanced</u>	83.7	25.3	03/04
<u>CSAP 7th Grade Reading Test - % Proficient or Advanced</u>	75.5	34.8	03/04
<u>CSAP 7th Grade Writing Test - % Proficient or Advanced</u>	67.9	27.3	03/04
<u>CSAP 7th Grade Math Test - % Proficient or Advanced</u>	58.5	17.2	03/04
<u>CSAP 8th Grade Math Test - % Proficient or Advanced</u>	60.9	14.9	03/04
<u>CSAP 8th Grade Science Test - % Proficient or Advanced</u>	82.6	20.2	03/04
<u>CSAP 8th Grade Reading Test - % Proficient or Advanced</u>	89.1	34	03/04
<u>CSAP 8th Grade Writing Test - % Proficient or Advanced</u>	67.4	25.8	03/04

Slavens is a k-8 school, so there are students from kindergarten to 8th grade. There is a small need for reduced lunches, which can be good indicator of students that are college bound since students with reduced lunches are 11 times more likely of not attending college. There is also a high level of attendance, which can help account for the excellent rating in the csap scores.

The Colorado governor has recognized the school for high academic achievement growth rates. There are powerfully effective partnerships among students, teachers and parents. The middle school has high levels of student behavior, motivation and performance. There are numerous after-school programs, parent education program, a dynamic arts program. and a challenge program employing architects and architecture to create interdisciplinary learning. Exemplary middle school sports program.

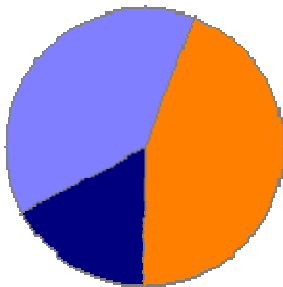
Free or Reduced Price Lunch 2003-04		This School	District Average
% Students Receiving Free or Reduced-Price Lunch		4.1%	76.8%
Student Attendance and Completion 2002-03		This School	District Average
Attendance Rate 2003-04		95.8%	91.8%
Suspension Rate		1.4%	23.2%
Stability Rate 2003-04		79.5%	50.0%
Dropout Rate		n/a	1.2%
English Language Learners 2002-03		This School	District Average
% English Language Learners (Spanish)		0.4%	15.5%
% English Language Learners (Total)		0.4%	16.6%

The Teachers

The principal at this school has 3 years of experience overall and 1 year at this school. The teaching staff experience at Slavens consists of: 18% of the teachers have three years or less experience, 40% have 4-10 years of experience, and 44% have 11 years or more experience. At Slavens, 30% of the teachers have a Masters degree.

The teaching staff and faculty have been very helpful and cooperative throughout the planning process. The teachers have made their children available for surveys and questioning, and have contributed their ideas about the needs of the school and the students. The faculty has provided an adult perspective that is valuable when evaluating the safety and hazards of the current conditions

Teacher & Principal Experience	Slavens	Other Schools	
% teachers w/ <3 years experience	17.4	28.1	02/03
% teachers w/ 4-10 years experience	39.1	29.6	02/03
% teachers w/ >11 years experience	43.5	42.5	02/03
% teachers w/ Masters	30.4	44	02/03
% Teachers Unlicensed	4.3	8.8	



Teacher Experience	This School	This District
3 or Fewer Years	17.4%	29.3%
4-10 Years	39.1%	26.5%
11 or More Years	43.5%	44.2%

The Community and Parents



Parents are involved in all aspects of the school from helping in the classroom to guiding the future of Slavons as members of the collaborative decision-making team. The P.T.A. presents parent educational programs, raises funds, coordinates volunteer activities and sponsors social events that serve to strengthen school and community ties. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in the partnership between school and home. This school received positive responses from parents 81% of the time in the DPS School Satisfaction survey

There is an opportunity to create an even greater sense of cohesion among the members of the community through this project. The recreation of the playground will welcome and invite all members of the community. The community of students and parents, residents and visitors, are users that need to be considered in this project. The opportunity to create a strong communal bond should be recognized as part of the intention of the redevelopment. The community is in need of a public space that is safe, fun, and responsive to their needs.





Section 5: Site Inventory and Safety

Safety Issues

There is currently no shade available for the students or teachers which can lead to dehydration during the summer days. I did not see any water fountains for drinking anywhere nearby and this is another important factor that needs to be addressed. There are no rubber mats that surround the high playground equipment, which can be cause for injuries since there is not enough padding for probable falls. The soft surface would have to redone in general since there are insufficient in thickness and it is entirely composed of pea gravel which spreads all over the asphalt and can cause tripping situations. Some of the walkways are composed of dirt which has created mounds and dips in the land which could create tripping situations as well as causing some unsightly messes where these walkways meet the asphalt and there is runoff.

Site Safety Analysis

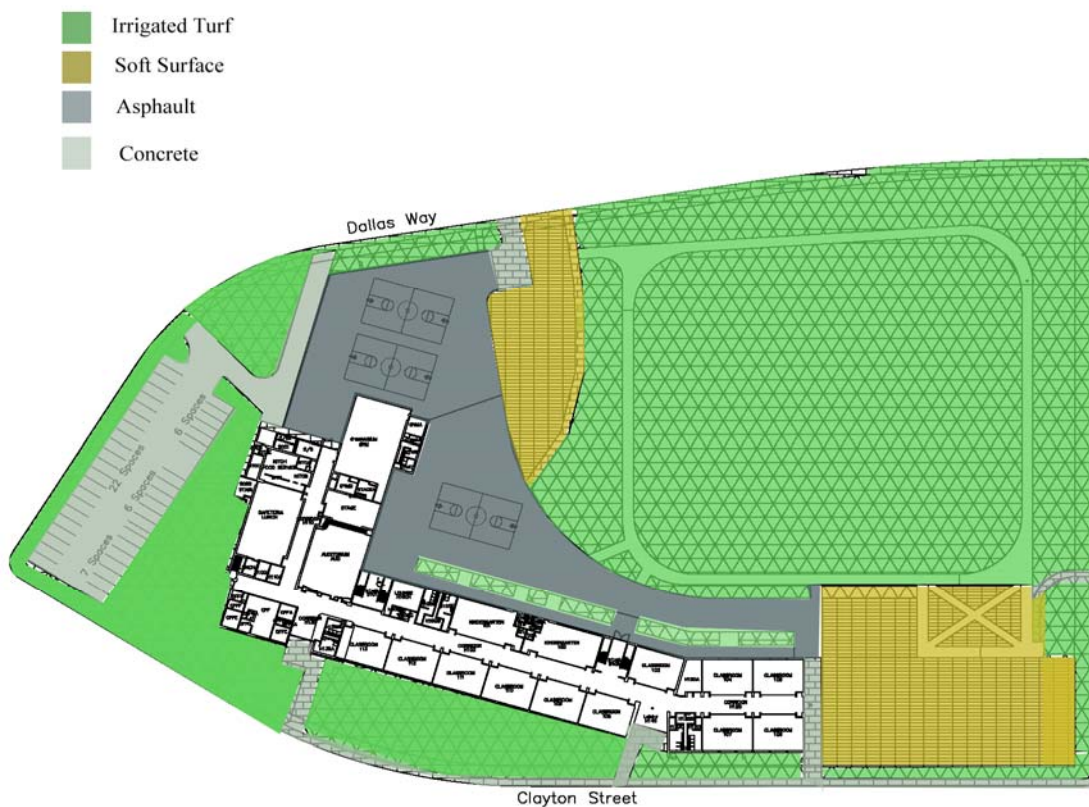
Item	Issues	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
A.	General Concerns				
1.	Can the playground be seen from the street?	X			
2.	Is the playground fenced off from the street, open water sources, ditches, etc?	X			
3.	Does the playground provide for wheelchair access?	X			
4.	Are drinking fountains present, operational, and clean?		X		I could not find any
5.	Is the size of the playground equipment correct for the age group utilizing it?	X			
6.	Does the playground have adequate site drainage?	X			
7.	Is the equipment free of vandalism?		X		There is some graffiti
8.	Does the playground provide approved shade structures and/or trees?		X		None
B.	Ground Cover				
1.	Is fall protection, EWF (Engineered Wood Fiber), provided under all play equipment?	X			
2.	Is the loose fall material 12 inches deep?		X		About 6"
3.	Does the fall material extend at least 6 feet beyond the play equipment footprint?	X			
4.	Is the fall material non-compacted?		X		It is compacted
5.	Is there a rubber mat present that is 1 inch thick for every 4 feet of equipment height?		X		none

6.	Does the fall material extend beyond the beam swing height? (1:2 Height to Distance Ratio?)	X			
7.	Is there a provision for keeping the swing area free of conflicting traffic?		X		NO
C.	Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Compliance				
1.	Are there openings present in the play equipment that are between 4 and 7 inches?	X			
2.	Are there any "V" shaped entrapments present in the play equipment?		X		
3.	Are there 38 inch high non-climbable tails on all raised platforms/decks?	X			
4.	Are there any protrusions that extend beyond the play equipment surface? If so, is the protrusion's end diameter larger than that of its base?	X			
XD.	Risk Management				
1.	Have the spin-arounds and see-saws been removed?	X			
2.	Are the decks lower than 66 inches high? Is the equipment height less than 104 inches?	X			
3.	Are the grass areas free of holes and/or protruding sprinkler heads?	X			
4.	Are the walkways and ball courts free of trip hazards?		X		Dirt mounds
5.	Are the trash cans/dumpsters "child-proofed"?	X			
6.	If present, are the soccer goals firmly anchored and in good condition?	X			
7.	If present, are the chain-link fencing mesh and any chain link backstop meshing serviceable and free of barbed edges?	X			
8.	Are the metal slides shaded? What is the slide compass orientation?	X			
9.	Have merry-go-rounds, pivot-type see-saws, concrete pipe, and glider-type swings been removed?	X			
10.	If present, are the basketball goals of the non-climbable gooseneck type?	X			
E.	Maintenance				
1.	Are the swings and bearing chains in good order?	X			
2.	Are "S" style hooks closed and swing seats intact?	X			
3.	Is the play equipment anchored according to specifications?	X			
4.	If present, are the wood structures sound, smooth, and free from splinters and excessive checks?	X			
5.	Are the trees properly pruned and healthy?	X			
6.	If present, are the benches sound, smooth, and free of any sharp corners?	X			
F.	Supervision				
1.	Is the play equipment centralized for easy supervision?	X			
2.	Is there a separate play area provided for the ECE / pre-primary children?	X			

General Surfaces

The assessment of Slavens' playground and exterior spaces was conducted through several site visits. The process involved the completion of a Site Inventory form, a Safety Assessment form, photographic documentation, personal observation, and conversations with school staff. A map of the school's current site layout and the table shows a summary of Slavens' major surface areas.

Asphalt	24 %	74,131 sq. ft.
Concrete	6 %	17,450 sq. ft.
Irrigated Turf	51 %	155,240 sq. ft.
Soft Surface	5 %	17,121 sq. ft.
Building	14 %	40,800 sq. ft.
TOTAL	100 %	304,678 sq. ft.



The Slavens site has a very large field that is heavily used, and this is one aspect that the students and teachers alike were very adamant about keeping. The only problem exists when it rains heavily; the field is unusable because it drains so slowly. The parking lot is small but is adequate for its purpose. The ECE and regular playgrounds are separate and have very different aesthetics about them. There are three entrances into the park, none of which are clearly defined. The playground in general relies mostly on the large field to accommodate all of the students playing needs which means other means of recreation are required.



Asphalt and Concrete

The asphalt surrounds the building inside the park area. It is in average condition with a few crack and uneven slopes. The edge of the asphalt is not clearly defined and makes for a poor transition from asphalt to turf. The concrete occupies the sidewalks that surround the park and the entry points. There are two sets of stairs that seem to be in adequate condition but are rather plain.

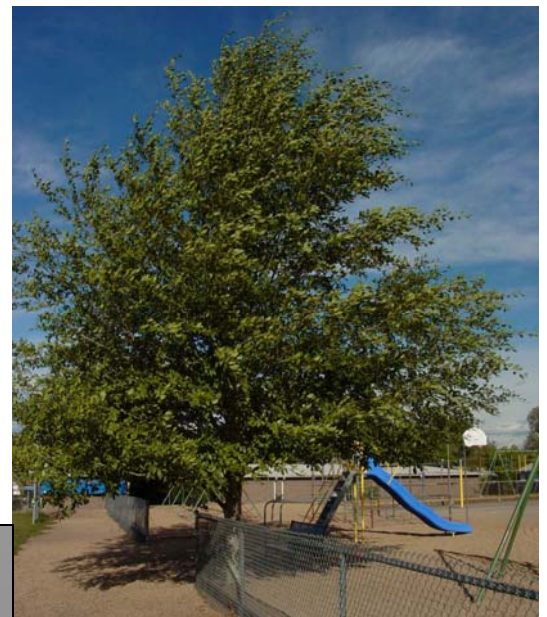


Soft Surface

Pea gravel is considered a soft surface and covers the entire ECE playground as well as the primary playground. In most areas, the pea gravel does not meet DPS standards of 12 inches of depth. It is not well contained and scatters unto the grass and asphalt.

Irrigated Turf and Vegetation

The grassy areas accounts for over 50% of the land. The field has just received new sod a couple of years ago, but is still not as green as the school would like because of possible drainage issues. The front of the building and the perimeter the playground are filled with a number of different old growth deciduous street trees that are good shape and add to the character of the school. The interior of the park has few newly planted trees next to the building and a couple of evergreens at different circulation intersections.



Play Equipment

The school has two main levels of play equipment for the ECE and primary students, with an open field and basketball courts for the intermediate students. The two areas are on opposite ends of the park and are vastly different in terms of the age of the equipment.

The ECE playground area is located to the east of the building which naturally separates it from the rest of the park. This area has two brand new play structures that come complete with plastic slides, bridges, ramps, and other interactive games. These structures are more than adequate for the school and should be apart of the design. The areas in which the design will affect are with the old swings that exist of which there are 11 swings. There is also an old balance beam that should be removed or updated. They are old and do not fit with the new play equipment. However, even with the new play equipment, there are only enough facilities to accommodate 30 of the 66 ECE children which is insufficient. The pea gravel is minimal and can be nuisance because of the fact that it gets kicked unto the asphalt and grass.



The primary play area is very outdated except for some new horizontal ladders and climbing area. There are 9 swings, a rope climber, and some spinning rings that are all outdated and if replaced will help create a cohesive theme within the park. This area is occupied with pea gravel once again, which has an insufficient thickness and seeps on to other areas of the park. The equipment is directly across from the trash receptacles that should be re-placed into another area. There are also some rusted fences that outline this play area that really bring the area down. This area is close to the north entrance and should be made more inviting and more maintained to create a better look and deter any inappropriate activity.



In the intermediate level there is the giant field, two tether ball locations, 5 hopscotch areas, 9 four square opportunities, and two basketball courts. This area does have an abundance of activities available but they are scattered and with no consistency. This area is completely paved except for the field and a few planter areas. The asphalt is cracking and could be redone; a little variety and color could help incorporate the many different activities in this area.

Drainage

According to the experts, Slavens is one of the better irrigated schools in the area and has sufficient drainage, but the students and teachers have complained about the field being unusable after heavy rains because it isn't draining properly.



Vehicular Access

There are 41 parking spaces in the parking lot and no drop off lane for the busses which is below DPS standards, but this does not seem to be an issue from the site advisory board for there is adequate street parking. The service entrance is on the east side of the building, which is next to the parking and some of the trash receptacles. The other trash bins should be moved to this location and more space provided for this area.



Section 6: Survey of Constituent Needs and Desires

The needs and desires of the students, teachers, staff, and community were discovered through a variety of means. One of the sources was through a photo survey of which there were 19 images that the constituents could choose their favorite five possible improvements. This survey was handed out to the teachers who had every student in every grade fill one out; this gave us a pretty clear understanding of what the children desired. The faculty and teachers also completed the surveys and I received further comments from them in terms of what needed to be changed. The shade shelter, climbing wall, outdoor classroom, and boulder configurations were the items most sought after. Though after talking with the students and teachers there was also a desire for game tables.

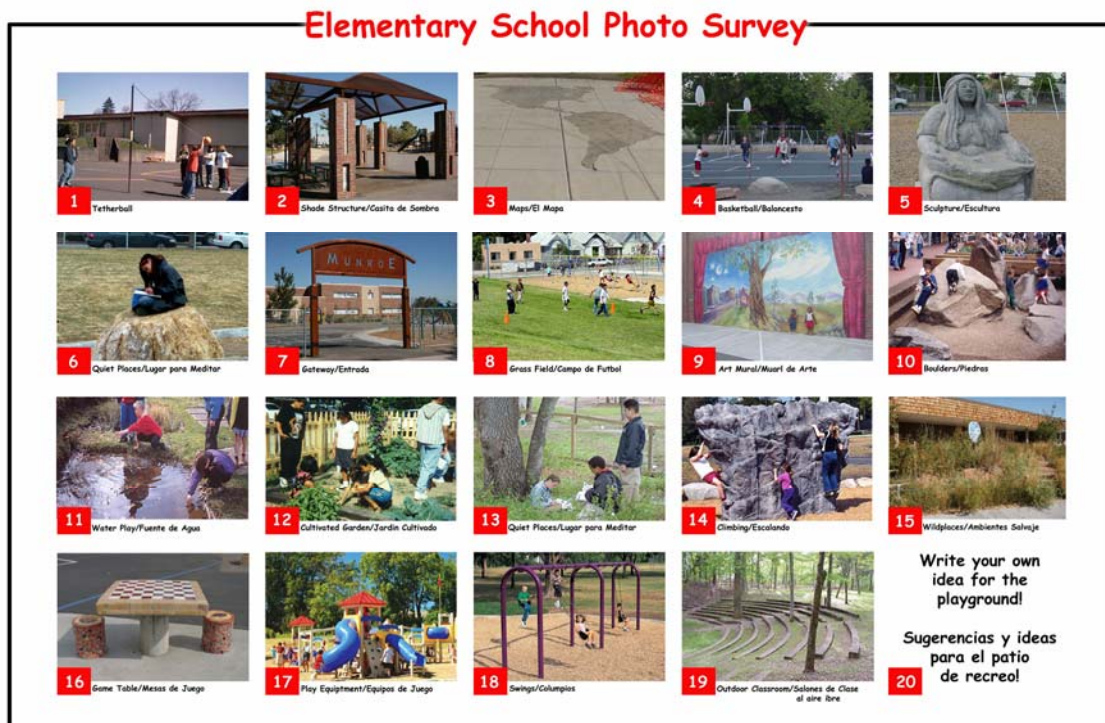
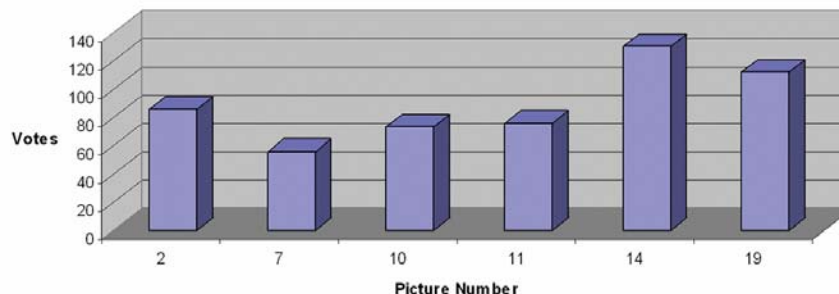


Photo Survey Results





The other means by which this information was acquired was by having the students draw and take pictures of things that they liked and disliked. They were also asked to draw maps of their neighborhood express the areas that they liked and disliked in order to get an understanding of the neighborhood. The student body council were chosen to represent the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders for these assignments, while a handful of 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders were also chosen to do the assignments. The student council took the pictures and gather information on the internet, while the younger children drew pictures and maps of what the liked.



Boulders/Piedras



Climbing/Escalando

Constituents	Issues/ Amenities
students 3rd, 4th, 5th graders	Busy roads make for dangerous areas the field is not well maintained other parks like dinosaur park have enjoyable programmatic features
students 6th, 7th, 8th grades	needs to be a place that is just associated for the older kids separation is a key factor, outdoor game tables more modern activities like a skate park, or outside classrooms
teachers	Areas of better supervision is required make it more inviting and a more educational atmosphere
parents	more activities, better maintained fields more inviting
community without children	a more cohesive theme more natural amenities/ more symbolic gestures uninviting/
Service / Maintenance	irrigation maintenance free



Part II: THE MASTER PLAN

Introduction

There are 5 components to this master plan that are intimately intertwined in the development of the playground:

- The vision and goals;
- The list of programmatic elements;
- The spatial concept; and,
- The organizational concept.

The vision and goals were created in response to the needs and desires of the school and the surrounding community. The vision concisely states the overall objective of the playground design. The goals lay out more specifically how the vision will be fulfilled. The list of programmatic elements quantifies the physical elements and games that will occupy various spaces on the playground. The spatial concept diagrammatically describes how the programmatic elements spatially relate to one another and to the surrounding context. Finally, the organizational concept sets up a method for organizing the programmatic elements on the grounds.



Together, these five components become the driving force for the actual design of the playground. Since these components are derived from the initial research and analysis, they powerfully address the needs and concerns of the school and surrounding community. And, as such, they are the seeds and the soil from which a fruitful, thoughtful design grows.



The Components

Vision

We strive to create an educational icon for the community that portrays acceptance, culture, and guidance for the students and the neighborhood. This is the re-birth of traditional morals and principles that outline the community vision of respecting the past while building the future.

Goals

- 1) Create a gateway and a focal point for the community
- 2) Provide opportunities for hands on learning
- 3) Improve playground equipment by making it more age appropriate
- 4) Create a more inviting atmosphere through a cohesive landscape that unites the park

List of Programmatic Elements

Play Equipment

Primary playground equipment area (30'x 60')
ECE Swings 5 Bays
Climbing Wall

Hard Surface Play

Six Math 4-square courts (fractions and proportions)
Six hopscotch courts (wavy to go along with weather pattern theme)
3 tetherball courts (weather related paintings)
Two full size basketball court with six hoops (40x75 each)
Storage facility

Open Areas

Two outdoor classrooms
Shade pavilion.
Resting tables and benches
Gateways and entry areas
Main entrance signage
Full service running track
Games Tables for checkers/chess; school chess club
Improved fencing

Landscape Elements

Compass garden 30 x 30

Boulder elements

Soft Surface Play

Artificial turf

Edge detail

Art Features

Wall Murals by gym

Decorated wall/word ball by main basketball courts

Weather pattern painting on asphalt

Silhouette images on fence

Art banners from students along perimeter fence

Memory walk

Educational Elements

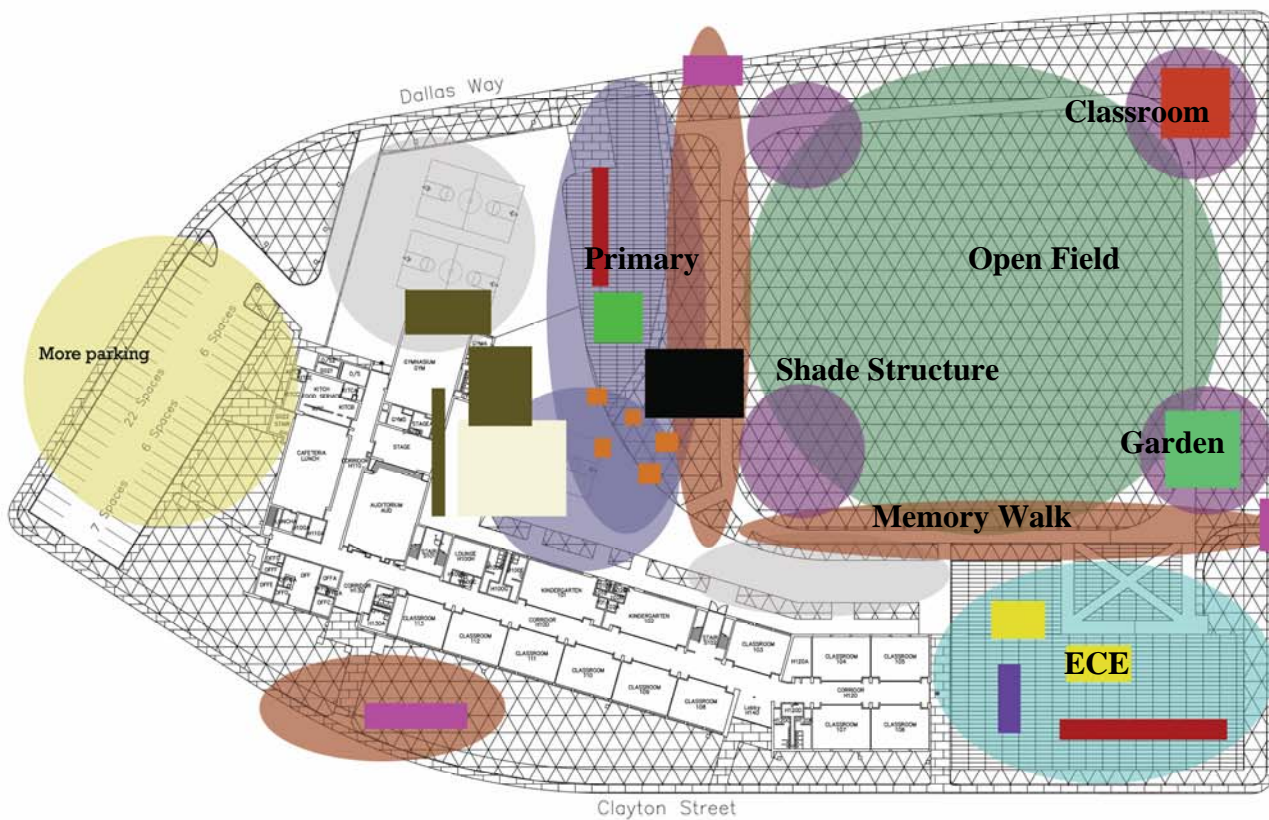
Maps

Alphabet walk

Word walls

Math walk

Spatial Diagram of Elements



Slavons ES

Bldg #279

Site #121

□ Asphalt	74,131	sq.ft.
■ Building	40,800	sq.ft.
■ Concrete	17,450	sq.ft.
■ Irrigated Turf	155,240	sq.ft.
■ Soft-surface	17,121	sq.ft.

Zones	Elements	Area/Quant
ECE Play Area		
	ECE Play Equipment	
	Pea Gravel	
	Engineered Wood Fiber	
	Swings	
	climbing wall	5 bay
Primary Play Area		
	Tether Ball	
	Basketball	
	Primary Play Set	
	Swings	
	artificial turf	
	game tables	
Intermediate Play Area		
	basketball	
	amphitheatre	
	garden	
	Shade Structure	
Open Field		
	soccer field	
	Track	
Hard Surface Areas		
	four-square	
	tetherball	
	basketball	
	hopscotch	
	specialty painted surfaces	
Perimeter Elements		
	Benches	
	Signage	
	Gateways	
Circulation		
	Proposed	
	Existing	
Existing Elements in Black and Proposed Elements in Yellow		
Zone Area Colors correspond to spatial diagram		
Circulation colors represent paths on spatial diagram		



How The Goals Will Be Fulfilled:

Goal 1: Create a gateway and a focal point for the community

A major portion of the design will go towards gateways at two of the three entry points onto the park. A main gateway with signage and seating shall be positioned in front of the main entrance. These gateways will embrace the cultural identity of the community

and help define the entry points. The exterior fences will be updated and given an artistic appeal through



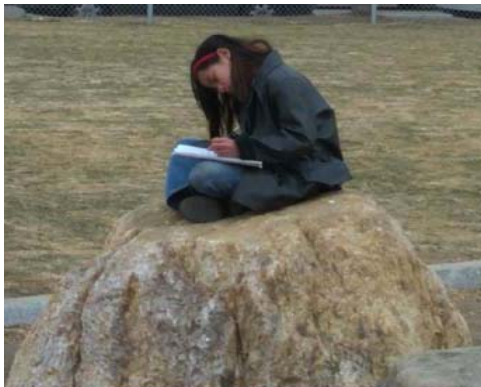
silhouette figures representing different storm formations making the perimeter aesthetically pleasing and safe by increasing the visual barriers to the streets. There will be banners set all along the perimeter that will not only strengthen the parks aesthetics but also define the park as a focal point for the community.

“Places are an important source of individual and communal identity, and are often profound centers of human existence to which people have deep emotional and psychological ties.” (The Resurgence of Place, Don Alexander)

Goal 2: Provide opportunities for hands on learning

The new Learning Landscape at Slavens will create many opportunities for children to learn and play in both structured and unstructured ways. The goal is to encourage and challenge both the physical and mental abilities of the kids. The landscape will contain gardens and other features that have specific educational themes. The outdoor classroom will give teachers an alternative place to bring their classes as well as provide a nice setting for informal uses.

“Learning is enhanced when multiple senses are engaged, when children actively take part rather than passively listen, and when learning occurs in a setting that is part of daily life.” (Julie M. Johnson, ASLA)





Goal 3: Improve playground equipment by making it more age appropriate

The equipment shall be updated and separated into different corridors. The area will be covered with artificial turf and engineered wood fiber to avoid the spilling over of pea gravel and create some more inviting locations. The equipment will incorporate learning and art to exercise the mind as well.



Goal 4: Create a more inviting atmosphere through a cohesive landscape that unites the park

The shade structure shall be centrally located and incorporate the intersection of the circulation paths. This shelter, the new gateways, replacement and concealment of trash bins, and the improved fence line will make the park more inviting from the exterior. The compass garden, improved hard surface areas, and cohesive theme will make the park more inviting from the interior. The outdoor classrooms, shade structure, and game tables will keep people in the park.





Ordering System

There are specific weather patterns that need to exist in order for storms to occur. An intricate dance between hot and cold fronts that unite through streams of air creates the awe-inspiring view of a storm formation in the sky. People cannot help but look at the shifting clouds and want to learn more about it. These patterns can be utilized as a valuable ordering system on land to create that same awe-inspiring effect that is suitable for an educational playground so that the students may begin to understand the sky as they play on the ground.

