

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Envisioning the future of your schools can be a powerful experience. Creating a Vision based on shared values and future hopes can act as a catalyst for change and commitment. Key to this process is active participation, capturing diverse viewpoints, wide representation and taking a longer view of the school district's assets. Successful visioning gives people opportunities to participate directly in workshops and/or individual work sessions. This is what transpired over the past several months in the Battle Creek Public Schools.

In the Spring of 2007, KBD Planning Group, Inc. was retained by Battle Creek Public Schools to lead a Visioning Process and the development of educational specifications for a 'Model' Elementary School. The charge to this team was to lead faculty and staff through a visioning process that resulted in a clear description of how education will be delivered at the elementary level in the foreseeable future, to enable all students to better reach their academic potential.

In developing a 'model' that will be utilized first for Valley View Elementary, Battle Creek Public Schools has created a benchmark against which all future elementary remodeling, additions or replacement projects can be based. Though it may be structurally and fiscally impossible to achieve 100% of the aspects of the program spelled out in this document in existing schools, the intent is to realize as many of these design and program features as practicable. The educational specifications provide the design professionals with the standards upon which to base their design to achieve parity among all elementary schools in the district.

To achieve this goal, planning charrettes were held over a period of several months with a visioning committee consisting of teachers and administrators from across the district. Through presentations, interactive exercises, small and large group work sessions, concepts were developed for the 'Model' Elementary School. After the planning charrettes were held, additional sessions were held with individual members of the visioning committee, to refine the standards previously agreed upon.

The 'Model' Elementary School Specifications call for five key elements:

- ❖ Establish grade level Neighborhoods to provide four classes per grade.
- ❖ Create Family Activity Rooms as the unifying student project focal point for each Neighborhood.
- ❖ Provide appropriate space for specialty (Art, Music, Enrichment, Physical Education) and support programs.
- ❖ A new technology infrastructure that provides the integration of technology tools into the teaching and learning environment.
- ❖ Establish a target upon which to focus in achieving parity in elementary learning environments district-wide.

We at KBD Planning Group, Inc. appreciate this opportunity to work with the faculty, staff, and TMP Architects, to develop a vision for a 'model' elementary school. Teachers are the critical component in the teaching/learning process and the quality and quantity of spaces, equipped with the necessary technology tools can empower teachers to create stimulating, successful and productive learning environments.

Every attempt has been made to establish spaces that will lead to a more active, hands-on environment for young learners. These factors are molded together to develop Educational Specifications that can be used to design or redesign elementary schools within the available budget constraints of the School District while remaining responsive to the educational program that will be housed within these buildings.

*KBD Planning Group, Inc.
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