

22 June 2021

## MEETING MINUTES

**PROJECT NAME:** Newport News Southeast Resource Area Master Plan  
**QEA PROJECT #:** 42025320  
**MEETING:** Middle School Programming Meeting  
**MEETING DATE:** 06.17.2021  
**ATTENDEES:** Sheila McAllister, Director of Planning, City of Newport News  
Tina Manglicmot, Chief Academic Officer of Teaching and Learning, NNPS  
Michele Mitchell, Exec. Director for Student Advancement, NNPS  
Joanne Jones, Exec. Director of Curriculum and Development, NNPS  
Steve Smith, Facilities Project Manager, NNPS  
Charles Tilley, Quinn Evans  
Syd Knight, Quinn Evans  
Allison Powell, Quinn Evans  
Erin Carver, Quinn Evans  
Allie Jarett, Quinn Evans

## INTRODUCTION

- Michele Mitchell is a past principal of Huntington Middle School. She knows a lot about the history of the site, and her father graduated from Huntington High School.
- Tina, Joanne, and Steve are relatively new to NNPS. They started after the 2018 Grimm & Parker Middle School Study was published.

## ICEBREAKER: What is the one thing that will happen to make this project a success?

- Collaboration amongst all stakeholders/organizations involved
- Instructional philosophy drives the school design
- An active outdoor education program
- Safety/security: Controlling access to classrooms - dividing public from private school spaces
- Collaborative spaces
- Flexible classrooms
- Remembering the history of the school and the community
  - Graduates of Huntington High School live in the surrounding community
  - Huntington HS was historically the center of the community; people were there at all hours
  - The community watched the band practice and there were events in the gym/cafeteria for the community after school
- Collaboration with the Scott Center
- Make the school feel truly welcome, a safe space, like home
- Natural light
- A school that facilitates the blended learning environment
  - Flexible spaces and seating, accommodation of small and large groups
- Professional learning community – meeting space for teachers
- Strategic glazing – glazing between classrooms and collaboration areas, but flexibility to close off when needed to minimize distractions
  - Operable whiteboards to close off distractions
- Getting middle schoolers to focus so that they can move forward to the next level
- Indoor air quality
- Staying economical
- Understanding responsibilities to the building – management of different organizations together
- After-hours access and maintenance
- College campus feel
- Large maker/builder space part of a community building that both school and community can use

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## FOCUS CRITERIA

- Focus Criteria from 2018 Middle School Study by Grimm & Parker
  - Celebrate the Community
  - Celebrate Learning
  - Open and Secure Environment
  - Be Sensible
  - Students Matter
- Guiding Principles from 2018 Middle School Study by Grimm & Parker
  - Meaningful Community Opportunities
  - A Culture of Student Empowerment
  - Innovative Learning Spaces
  - Collaborative Learning Communities
- NNPS confirmed that the focus criteria and guiding principles from the 2018 study still apply, but now with a focus on the school's relationship to the other community buildings on site.

## PEDAGOGIES & FUTURE-READY PLANNING

- NNPS promotes a service-learning environment
  - Microcosms of communities: classroom, grade level, school, neighborhood, city
  - Community and school supporting each other in both directions
  - How it works: There is a need identified in the community, schools create projects based on that need, students create solutions working with the community
  - Examples: Outdoor garden that the community builds and students maintain, students working with community entrepreneurs to design websites or help with graphics, carpentry projects with the community
  - Service learning embeds the community into what the school is doing
- NNPS has been adopting blended learning successfully
  - Critical thinking over memorization
  - Information accessed through technology, teacher is the facilitator for deeper learning and application
  - No more lectures
  - NNPS uses a learning management system to identify where students are and customize learning
    - NNPS can tailor small groups and personalized instruction to the students' needs
  - Student agency, taking control of their own learning
  - COVID became an opportunity to catapult the transformation of learning for NNPS
  - Most teachers have been embracing the change (around 80%)
  - The blended learning environment has flexible spaces, flexible seating, and operable walls
  - NNPS could potentially use CARES Act funding to invest in new, flexible furniture
- Technology
  - Technology is one-to-one, each student has a laptop
  - No need for a computer lab in the school, but rather a place for using laptops and easy access charging
  - If high-intensity programs are needed, they could be checked out
  - Projectors or monitors are still needed in classrooms so that a class can do Zoom calls and virtual meetings
  - NNPS likes the idea of a mobile cart for technology within the classroom
- Testing
  - Virginia is implementing K-12 state diagnostic testing three times a year to identify the root cause of student struggles with certain topics
  - Some SOL tests are still required, but the NNPS administration is not focusing on tests to evaluate teachers and schools
  - Deeper learning is the key.
- Wellness
  - Incorporation of wellness is very important for students, teachers, and staff.
  - Teacher wellness room is desired – quiet, zen space without technology or supplies
  - Provide a balance of collaborative and quiet zones for students in the learning commons and the classrooms
  - Henley Middle School Fit for Life Center in Albemarle County embraces wellness with rowing machines in the corridor, artificial turf in the gym, technology tracking and displaying student data
    - Fitness for life, not just for athletics
- Storage

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- NNPS likes examples of operable whiteboard walls with storage behind
- Science and STEM equipment could be distributed throughout the school, less storage rooms but closer to all labs (maybe one per floor)
- Lockers might not be needed, students do not carry textbooks
- Lockers could be provided for project storage, not assigned to each student
- Grade / House Concept with multiple teams per grade
  - Three-story concept for HMS could work, each story is a grade
  - Team layout within each grade level could work, but classes could potentially cross teams to make the spaces more flexible
  - NNPS likes the idea of color-coded wings for wayfinding and student ownership of spaces
  - Concept of two classrooms with a shared lab space could work well
  - Spaces should be as fluid as possible and as broad as possible
- Academies
  - There could be an academy within the school, but the school should serve the surrounding community as well.
  - Booker T. Washington Middle School nearby has a marine science academy.
  - An academy option for Huntington MS could be “Air, Space, and Land.”
  - NNPS has one of two aviation academies in the state.
  - STEM should be incorporated early in middle school pathways.
- CTE
  - CTE pathways start in fifth grade and continue through middle and high school.
  - A robotics lab or lab with large projects should be located on the first floor for easy access to outdoors, large garage doors are ideal
- Special Education
  - Huntington MS could potentially have two self-contained spaces for each grade level (six total)
  - Special education is typically about 12% of the student population
- Assembly spaces
  - The middle school gymnasium should be able to accommodate an all-student assembly.
  - NNPS likes the idea of a large gym and a small gym.
    - The community center should have some shared use of the gym.
  - NNPS likes the idea of an auditorium that could accommodate all students, but this is not incorporated into the program from the 2018 study.
    - The study includes a forum/flex performance space with flexible seating for 300 and an adjacent outdoor amphitheater space
    - The existing HMS auditorium has fixed seating (was originally designed as a HS auditorium)
- Specialty spaces
  - Are three full-sized art labs needed in the new HMS? There are three in the 2018 study.
  - A teaching/demonstration kitchen could be nice (culinary arts is expanding in NNPS)
    - This could be a community space that students visit

## OUTDOOR SPACES

- An approach is to think of the site as a park first – outdoor spaces are the first element, not leftover space
- Athletics fields
  - There is not a need for a regulation football field, regulation baseball field, or regulation track since those are not interscholastic sports at the middle school level
    - Only track, volleyball, and basketball are interscholastic
  - It would be ideal to have spaces for intramural: baseball, soccer, track & field, basketball (could be indoors), and football
  - Soccer and football could be the same field (multi-purpose)
  - Fields will need a spectator space for lawn chairs, potentially bleachers
  - Track does not need to be a full track or even rubberized
    - Needs to be accessible to the community, maybe it wraps around the entire site?
    - Track & field events/competitions are held at Todd Stadium
  - Outdoor basketball not necessary for the school
  - A community baseball field would be nice
    - There are baseball fields as Anderson Park and Booker T. Washington MS
  - Most pick-up games are football or basketball, not too much baseball
  - Parks & Rec uses the school fields after 6pm
  - Fields can be more flexible and multi-purpose

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- Outdoor activities
  - A trail (that could potentially serve as a track) is desired, like the ones at Riverview Park
  - P.E. program incorporates archery, bike riding, roller blading, golf, among other activities
- Outdoor learning spaces
  - Outdoor classroom space is desired – Sandy Bottom Nature Park has good examples
  - Greenhouse and community garden
    - Let the students create the garden with help from the community
  - Outdoor amphitheater
  - Outdoor project tables, picnic tables
  - Shade structures, pergolas
- Outdoor equipment storage should ideally be attached to a building.
- Transportation
  - Make sure to include service access to cafeteria (daily deliveries) and mechanical areas
  - Quinn Evans will need to confirm the walk-zone distance to the school site
  - How many buses will be needed for the bus loop?
    - QE to confirm with NNPS Transportation
  - Consider street entrances and how that will affect traffic
  - Community facilities can reduce their on-site parking requirements
- Front door of Huntington perceived to be located on Orcutt Avenue (where the original HS entrance was located)

#### SHARED SPACE OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

- Idea from NNPS: A director of the Southeast Community Resource Area should be appointed by the city to ensure collaboration and communication amongst all organizations on the site (Middle School, Community Center, Library, Scott Center)
- The entire site should act as an ecosystem, working together for the greater good
- Huntington MS & the Scott Center
  - They used to share the small gym connected to the Scott Center (before HMS relocated)
  - Teachers from the school would tutor students who went to the Scott Center after school
    - Classroom space within the middle school was used for tutoring after hours
  - The Scott Center would use the middle school auditorium or cafeteria for large events
  - The Scott Center works with students from across the city, not just Huntington
- After school programs should align with what students are learning in class during the day
- NNPS likes the idea of HMS taking advantage of all resources on site
  - Students can go on chaperoned field trips to the community buildings during the day
  - CTE programs could use community spaces as resources
- There is a need to plan what hours each facility is available for students vs. the community
  - Spaces potentially staffed differently depending on scenario
- The school's library could potentially minimize their collection based on the partnership with Pearl Bailey Library on site.

#### FOLLOW UP

- Quinn Evans to send NNPS:
  - 2018 Grimm & Parker Study
  - 2018 Grimm & Parker MS Program
  - Infographic on Gen Z and Gen Alpha
  - Examples of Learning Commons (Media Centers)
- Quinn Evans to confirm the middle school program with NNPS.

#### END OF MEMORANDUM

Prepared by Allie Jarett, QE

If there are any questions or comments regarding this Meeting Memorandum, please contact this office within ten (10) days or it will stand as correct.