

2022



HELP
US

IMAGINE



A NEW

ASHLEY

ACADEMY

ASHLEY ELEMENTARY COMMUNITY, WE
WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! WHAT SHOULD
THE NEW ASHLEY LOOK LIKE AND WHY?

Community
DREAM REPORT



Action4Equity



FORSYTH FAMILY POWER
THINK-AND-DO TANK



Statement

Our organization was born of the bold vision and fierce passion fueling the campaign for a new school for the predominantly Black and brown, economically disadvantaged students of the Ashley Academy for Global Studies. We are all familiar with the challenges that face Title 1 Schools such as Ashley, and so the very least that our school system can provide is a safe, clean, learning environment that all of us can be proud to enter.

We call upon our community to fund education like we never have before; building a new school for Ashley is just one small part of reversing inequity, but it is urgent, unfinished business.

"I want to dream big about what this could be for our kids"



A4E #Action4Ashley
ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

Rev. Paul Ford

Katie Sonnen-Lee

Rev. Alvin Carlisle

Kellie Easton

Forsyth Family Power

Sharlee Hainesworth, Lead Parent Researcher

Community Design Consultant Facilitator

Glenn Fulk



"We want to motivate children to see school in a different way. It's not just work and responsibility and sitting down. If we design an open and interactive school and a different way of learning, it's going to motivate them to go and to learn.. This should not feel like jail, like a 7 hour daily sentence for our kids."





Community Context & Background from Canvassing

During the Ashley Community Feedback process, Action4Equity canvassed the neighborhood zone and gathered feedback from former and current families, students and staff, in addition to community members who were invested in the quality of education their neighbors' children would receive from the new Ashley Elementary.

Initially, a lot of community members were skeptical or had no idea that a new school was approved and would be built nearby. Canvassers learned to begin conversations by informing folks that there was going to be a new school built - a school other community members helped lead a successful campaign for.

Once people were aware, they often began reflecting on the old Ashley School and what it meant to them, including some community members who had multiple generations of their family attend Ashley. One community member shared that Ashley School was like “home” to him, but that he was happy to have an upgraded school in the community that other kids can get that same feeling from, a view that was expressed by many. One grandmother even expressed how they had to move their grand-daughter to Raleigh to stay with relatives due to the health issues she was facing at Ashley because of the child's asthma. Everyone was very happy to hear that they would have a new school in the area where the students and staff would have clean air to breathe.

Overall, the community was excited about the idea of a new Ashley being built to replace the current school. However, many shared concerns with the location of the new school and how to keep children safe while they learn and as they travel to and from school. They want to see the area around the future school made into a safe and functional environment for the students to learn and thrive during and after school hours. They also want to see opportunities to connect the school with the community via fundraisers, educational programs, and an overall sense of community.

Sharlee Hainesworth
Forsyth Family Power





"A school not just to study but to also do outdoor activities to learn. Kids need more than just studying books at their desk, both in school and after school. Let's make school fun and a place where the kids like to be during the day and do things after school that are fun"

Exterior Spaces

Research has shown that exposure to green space and vegetation positively impact elementary school reading, writing, math, and language test scores, as well as increasing mental health and resilience and decreasing obesity and other diseases.

"Impact of views to school landscapes on recovery from stress and mental fatigue"

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0169204615002571>

Vegetation and vehicle emissions around primary schools across urban Australia: associations with academic performance

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0013935122005837>

Fitness and Activity Spaces

a. Playgrounds

- i. The community observed that the school will need more than one playground for 700-800 kids.
- ii. Play is important and teaches learning, teamwork and imagination, which are all important skills.
- iii. Playgrounds should also be accessible to the community after school and on weekends. How can the school grounds integrate with Fairview Park (like at Speas and Polo Park/Polo field)?

b. Walking Track

- i. Ashley currently has this, and many folks wanted to have this feature at the new school. They mentioned that it would be nice to have trees and nature integrated with the walking path, not just a dirt path around a field.

c. Sports fields

- i. The baseball field is another piece that people like from the current Ashley and want to have at the new building. They use it a lot throughout the year and for special events like field day. Soccer and volleyball were also mentioned, especially by Spanish-speaking parents.

"Right now Ashley has a track and a baseball field
Want to keep that. Good for field day."

Exterior Spaces

Integrating Nature and Natural Spaces

a. Greenhouse

i. The current greenhouse should be moved and incorporated into the new school grounds (staff reported there is money to have it repaired and plans are in the works to move it and repair it). Preference would be to have it near the other community services on site (examples: a food co-op, healthcare, gardens, etc).

b. Outdoor Classroom

i. Outdoor classroom space with benches was brought up several times. Hanes Middle was mentioned as a good example.

c. Water and Water Play

i. A stream or creek where kids could play with water was mentioned several times. Many mentioned that water is soothing and calming, which would be beneficial for students and the community. It could even be a feature that can be turned on or off and/or fed with cisterns that collect rainwater.

d. Fairview Park

i. Maintaining the park as an open community space is important, but it could be utilized as additional outdoor space by the school. Many individuals and groups use the park, however, they understand that the school children would have the "right of way" during school hours.

"We have a changing generation that is so active and intelligent. But we are closing them in with structures. We want the learning process to be free again. I'm an occupational therapist. I know it can be difficult to get out of the classrooms with the students, but we have to integrate the outside environment with the learning process. They need to be in nature. They can't just learn that from a book."

Physical Environment

"Natural light, corridors and movement, and access to views of the outdoors had a "significant influence" on ITBS scores in reading comprehension, vocabulary, language arts, math, and science.

Designing Classrooms to Maximize Student Achievement

https://ilabs.uw.edu/sites/default/files/14Cheryan_etal_Meltzoff_Designing%20Classrooms.pdf

Improving the School Environment

a. Natural Light

i. This was lifted up by a lot of people, as a good way to integrate nature, make the building feel fresh and new, and reduce energy costs. However, parents were concerned that the children might get distracted by anything happening outside the windows or that the windows could be a security issue.

b. Flow and Connection

i. Respondents wanted to have one school building, instead of multiple like at the current Ashley, for cohesiveness and safety. Good flow throughout the school to help build community and feel connected was also mentioned multiple times. Currently there are multiple buildings with dead end hallways, which makes the school feel disjointed and disconnected.

Building and Maintenance

a. Prompt Repairs

i. Issues with the roof and HVAC were mentioned multiple times with the current school. Folks wanted to be sure there was a way to report issues and ensure they would be corrected so the school could be well-maintained. The gym currently has no air-conditioning, and classrooms have leaks when it rains.

b. Air Quality Monitoring

i. Regular air quality monitoring to prevent any more mold problems

Physical Environment

Parking and Traffic

a. Parking

- i. More parking for staff and parents was brought up frequently, as were concerns about vehicles that are blocked during pickup/drop off.

b. Traffic

- i. Separate routes and access points for buses, car riders, and walkers were discussed at every session. Currently, the school has essentially one route in for traffic (vehicle or pedestrian) and one way out. During pickup/drop-off, the traffic is terrible, and it's not safe for students and families to walk through all the vehicle traffic.

c. Sidewalks and Crosswalks

- i. Sidewalks bordering the roads all around the school were requested, in addition to sidewalks on neighboring streets that students would be walking on to access the school. This would ensure that students have a safe space to walk to school while buses and cars are driving to school. A crossing guard was also requested to ensure the safety of students walking to school.

d. Biking

- i. The school needs bike racks for students and staff to lockup their bikes with video monitoring of the area at all times.

"Don't have carline or busses sitting in the parking lot. You get trapped in the parking lot during pickup."

Safety and Security

"A safe school is often thought of as a school that repels intruders and weapons, but it must be more than that. A truly safe school allows students, staff and teachers to feel safe not just during emergency situations, but normal days, too...The physical design of a school can't fix all...problems, but it can support the social and emotional wellbeing of students, teachers and staff, as well as make it easier to address threats from inside and outside."

Building Safer Schools That Don't Look Like Prisons

<https://www.buildings.com/security/article/10196016/building-safer-schools-that-dont-look-like-prisons>

Barrier Between School and Surrounding Area

a. Secure and Attractive Wall/Fence

i. With Highway 52, Liberty Street, and a lot of housing being so close to the new site, many people mentioned wanting to make sure there would be a fence or wall that was both scenic and functional. This would help keep students from running into the street if they get upset, and help prevent others from coming in. Walls/fences would also prevent the kids from being distracted by what is going on out in the street.

b. Trees and Natural Borders

i. Incorporating trees along the side of the site facing the busy streets would also help to limit noise and pollution from the traffic.

c. Orientation of Classrooms

i. People wanted classrooms facing an interior courtyard. Community buildings, gymnasium, and offices could face the road.

Secure Doors and Access Points

a. Swipe Badges or Keypad

i. Secure access points with swipe badges or codes instead of physical keys. This would be more secure and trackable as far as who had access to the building.

b. Secured Doors

i. The community loved the idea of having community spaces integrated around the school. If community services are connected to the school building, however, they must have access points so that no one from the community can enter the school without going through the front office.

ii. A vestibule or "box-office window" where parents can do business with the front office/admin, but still be separated from accessing the school by a locked door.

Architectural Design

"When all students have a comfortable and supportive space to learn in, they go on to live happier, healthier lives outside of school."

"By taking a universal design approach, architects can more effectively meet the needs of every student and that students with disabilities aren't separated from everyone else or required to use their own entrances. Instead, architects simply make every area of the school more accessible."

"Including as many of the elements above as possible in every classroom is a good design best practice not just for students with disabilities, but for all students. This is the ultimate goal when designing for disabilities: every element of the design should benefit everyone who visits."

Inclusive Schools: Designing for Disability in Classrooms

<https://hmcarchitects.com/news/inclusive-schools-designing-for-disability-in-classrooms/>

Innovative Design Throughout the Building

a. A Next Generation School and Classrooms

- i. Innovation and imagination should be included throughout the school, not just in the media center and cafeteria like many school buildings. Students spend most of their time in classrooms, so let's make those great spaces, not just concrete boxes.
- ii. Having an innovative and beautiful school will help the students build pride and community, especially in the City of Arts and Innovation! Ashley could be a flagship school for our district and for our city as far as what the next generation of schools could and should look like.

Integrate the Outdoors

- a. Even when students are indoors, we can integrate nature into the school with windows, access points to nature, plants or a water feature. These things look nice, but they also have a positive impact on student's mental and physical health, and thus their learning. Children need to be in nature, and cannot learn everything they need from a book.
- b. Having a mental health space where students could find a quiet spot among nature was mentioned multiple times.

Architectural Design

A Culture of Inclusivity

a. Handicap Accessible

i. The current Ashley has a lot of stairs and other areas that are difficult to navigate for students and adults with mobility issues. In addition, the school is very spread out, and it can take a long time to reach different parts of the building, especially for handicapped students or staff.

b. Culturally Affirming

i. Culturally affirming design was lifted up several times, including murals and paintings from local artists or depicting local events and local figures. Ashley has primarily Black and Latinx students, but there are students there from all around the world. Let's celebrate that! Forest Park was mentioned as a school with a great mural in its library. We want the kids to see themselves in the school and have the architecture reflect them. Even the materials we build with can be part of this with lots of reflective surfaces, which also increase light in the school.

c. Multilingual Environment

- i. Ashley has a lot of families who do not speak English as their first language. They speak Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, Karenni and more. Signage should be in all languages.
- ii. Welcome signs in all languages near the front of the school, but also signs for the library, bathroom, cafeteria, etc should be multilingual.
- iii. An information board or screen that is electronic and shares news in multiple languages near the front door would help non-English speaking parents/caregivers get more information and feel more connected to the Ashley community

"We want the kids to see themselves in the school."

School Features

"The "whole child" movement is one that emphasizes raising emotionally and physically healthy children. That means educators may use a variety of teaching techniques to support the "whole child". Architects can help with this through efforts like designing for disabilities in schools."

Inclusive Schools: Designing for Disability in Classrooms

<https://hmcarchitects.com/news/inclusive-schools-designing-for-disability-in-classrooms/>

Student Needs

a. Bathrooms

- i. Each classroom should have its own bathroom, especially for the younger grades (K-2).
- ii. It would be great to also have a shower for students that have accidents.
- iii. Soap and paper towels should be right next to the sinks so students don't have to travel back and forth to dispensers. Right now they end up dripping water all over the floor which makes the floors very slippery.

b. Classrooms

- i. Personal Item Storage
 1. Each classroom should have storage space for coats and backpacks for each child.

Educator Needs

a. Staff/Teacher Lounge

- i. Intentionality with this space is important. Should be both functional and relaxing where staff can recharge.
- ii. There needs to be more than one bathroom for adults.

b. Workroom

- i. Fitted with "the same copy machine as the schools with more money", plenty of materials and storage, and enough countertop space for staff to organize materials/projects they are working on.

c. Laundry

- i. Washer and dryer at the school to wash school materials and/or student clothing for student's who don't have access to clean clothes.

School Features

Common Spaces

a. Media Center

- i. Larger library with more books and materials and a more welcoming environment. "We want a media center where you want to come in to read and hangout."
- ii. Bookshelves and access to books in all waiting rooms and common areas throughout the school, not just the media center.

b. Auditorium/Performing Arts Space

- i. Should be separate from the gymnasium to encourage the arts and cultural expression. This should have proper sound, lighting, and seating available.
- ii. Available for the community to reserve and use when school is out of session.

c. Science Lab and Technology

- i. Science space should be available for teachers to use to complement their curriculum
- ii. Plenty of technology, smart boards/walls, and more should be integrated into the classrooms and wider school building.

d. Gymnasium/Sports

- i. Sports facilities with changing rooms and concession stands are needed.
- ii. A rock climbing wall or equipment for activities other than basketball in the gym was mentioned several times.

e. Activity Spaces

- i. Dedicated space for after-school tutoring, clubs, childcare, and activities to keep students engaged in positive activities and behaviors when school is out.

f. Admin and Offices

- i. The school needs enough dedicated administrative and support spaces and offices to truly support the students and classroom staff. (For example, admin space, guidance/social work offices, a dedicated ISS room, large library and cafeteria.)

"We want a media center where you want to come in and read and hang out."

Community Connection

"There is a real sense of the communities being able to come into the schools, once they're completed, and see what impact they've actually had on the design, along with staff and children... there's a real sense of ownership."

The Willows Primary & Special School

<https://architype.co.uk/project/the-willows-primary-special-school/>

Holistic Wrap-Around Services

- a. This would draw people to the school and create a neighborhood "hub" where people could get their needs met and volunteer at the school. This would also provide volunteer opportunities for the students to help in the co-op, community garden, helping to clean up the grounds, etc.
- b. City of Winston-Salem, Housing Authority, and other area agencies should work together with Ashley to create a thriving neighborhood.
- c. Food
 - i. Community garden that would produce food for a food co-op.
 - ii. Food Co-Op and Community Kitchen could provide much needed healthy food access in the area. Some of the products could come from the community garden.
 - iii. Summer meals could be served to students here when school is not in session.
- d. Healthcare and Wellness
 - i. Mental Health office
 - ii. Doctor's office
 - iii. Dental office
 - iv. Weight room/fitness room
- e. Community Education
 - i. Classroom space for community needs such as GED classes, English as a Second Language, job skills, etc.
 - ii. Computer Lab where parents could learn how to navigate technology, especially school-related software like Canvas, PowerSchool, etc. so they could better help their students with their homework and be more connected to school information.
- f. Childcare
 - i. Having a high-quality child care center onsite for infants-age 5 would help parents be able to work and know that their kids are being taken care of AND help prepare children for kindergarten success.

Community Connection

"Creating a space for learning is not about making a shopping list of 3D printers and fancy chairs. You need to start out with a vision of what you want the learning experience to be, then you design a space that will support that vision."

In learning space design, form follows function

<https://remakelearning.org/blog/2019/07/12/in-learning-space-design-form-follows-function/>

Building Relationships Between Ashley and Community

a. Fairview Park

i. Utilize Fairview park for the community and the school to have events together and break down the perceived barriers between the school and community. Additional facilities could be added to school grounds to facilitate this as well.

b. Gym and Playground

i. Evenings and weekends these facilities could be open for the community to use, almost like a recreation center.

c. Community Access to Facilities.

i. Some school facilities being open on evenings and weekends was asked for many times. Being able to use the cafeteria or other large spaces for community events was desired. Community members and parents envisioned a space that would serve almost like a recreation center when the school is closed - a space with a gym, but also community meeting rooms, activities, classes, and more.

ii. Cultural celebrations could be part of the school, but also the community. Make sure there are spaces the community can utilize for events outside school hours

iii. Families wanted more opportunities and spaces for kids and families to interact and for parents/caregivers to feel involved in the school. For example, art space where they could do projects together, community gardens where they could grow food as a family, opportunities for families to share about their cultural background through food, dance, and arts and other activities to extend the school out into the greater community were all mentioned.

d. Public Wi-fi Access

i. Public w-ifi around the school that students and parents could access to view school information, assignments, etc.

"...have a space for the parents and kids to do a craft project or do art together..."



Closing Remarks...

"Equity is giving students what they need...it's not a one size fits all school."

"We have to be intentional and think about each kid as an individual. What is their experience? Most of their time will be in the classroom. That's where we should center the beginning of our design."

"Keep innovative design throughout the school. Not just library and cafeteria and shared spaces."

