Implications for 21st Century Learning

Facilities

Current Thinking
Facility design for schools has evolved over time from the traditional classroom of the nineteenth century, with one teacher addressing a roomful of students sitting in individual desks all facing forward to the teacher’s desk, to the open-plan schools of the 1970s, with various seating arrangements and sizes of classes, supplemented by temporary or modular classroom buildings. Increasingly, schools originally built with an open-plan are being modified to enclose the open classrooms. Ironically, schools originally built with traditional, enclosed classrooms, often along a double-loaded narrow corridor, are frequently being modified to remove the walls making them more open to provide a variety of spaces and to increase available daylight to the interior.

DoDEA Direction

- Create adaptable and flexible learning spaces – agile buildings that can change over time:
  - Accommodate change within the structure of the schools.
  - Pursue higher utilization of large, single-use spaces (cafeteria, auditorium, gym).
  - Provide spaces that can be quickly and easily adapted by teachers and students.
- Provide a variety of spaces to accommodate all learning styles:
  - Reassign existing facilities to provide for varying spaces.
  - Provide breakout areas for flexible learning spaces.
- Incorporate formal and informal learning spaces.
- Use school building and the local community (including the military installation).
- Invite and provide for different community elements within the school (i.e., teen community, parent community, general public, etc.).
- Accommodate all users – students, faculty stakeholders, community and families.
- Embrace virtual education with supporting physical space.
- Use non-assigned circulation space for learning.
- Allow for protected exterior space as an extension of the learning space.
- Balance the need for a securable facility with desired characteristics of open, collaborative and aesthetically pleasing space. Consider distributing media areas (library, technology) throughout the school.

- Consider having learning spaces that are open, inviting, and participatory with specialty areas for targeted support functions.
- Consider the openness and flexibility in the layout of a professional office as a model for learning centers.
- Building patterns to consider:
  - Visually supervised open space
  - Central greeting/gate keeper
  - Signature identity spaces, in part to aid transition of transferred students
- Embed technology throughout the school.

FACILITIES FOR 21st CENTURY LEARNING

The ‘BONES’ OF THE NEW SCHOOL MUST BE ABLE TO ADJUST TO CHANGE