



DETROIT LAKES PUBLIC SCHOOLS

AGENDA

WORK SESSION BOARD MEETING

Monday, July 17, 2023 - 5:00 PM

Laker Transitions Building, 1104 West River Road, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

The mission of the Detroit Lakes Public schools is to fill our sails with Laker PRIDE.

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- I. **CALL TO ORDER**
Presenter: Steffl, Board Chair
- II. **ROLL CALL**
Presenter: Steffl, Board Chair
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
Presenter: Steffl, Board Chair
- IV. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
Presenter: Steffl, Board Chair
- V. **DISCUSSION ITEMS**
Presenter: Steffl, Board Chair
 - A. Project Brief
Presenter: Mindi Jenson
 - B. Therapy Dog
 - C. School Board Self Evaluation
- VI. **MEETING ADJOURNED**
Presenter: Steffl, Board Chair

I pledge allegiance to the flag
of the United States of America,
and to the Republic
for which it stands,
one Nation under God,
indivisible,
with Liberty and Justice
for all.





HIKE.LEARN.BE

GROWING SUCCESSFUL
OUTDOOR PROJECTS

Project Funded By:

The University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships Grant

Partners:

HLB HIKE LEARN BE: Mindi Jenson

Detroit Lakes Public Schools: Superintendent Mark Jenson

University of Minnesota School of Design: Emily Stover

Design Guidelines For Future Considerations

Written by: Mindi Jenson

The following is a comprehensive exploratory project utilizing design principles, this guide is designed specifically for Detroit Lakes Public Schools. We sincerely hope that you find this guide immensely valuable and insightful in your design endeavors.

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Detroit Lakes' objectives *as a starting point*

Key Findings

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- [Co-design Session](#)
 - How might we use the land flexibly for both community and school use?
 - [Must Have A](#)
 - [Must Haves B](#)
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Summary of Project

HIKE. LEARN. BE

HIKE.LEARN.BE. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to amplifying the impact of nature experiences for communities across Minnesota. Our mission is to foster happier, healthier communities by fostering connections among Minnesotans, with a special focus on women and children.

We take a thoughtful and pragmatic approach to enhancing educational outcomes, improving health and well-being, particularly for those affected by systemic inequities and maximizing our inherent connection to nature. Our vision is to be a trusted partner in cultivating bonds with nature, one another, and ourselves.

We advocate for increasing outdoor time based on several key reasons:

1. **Health and Well-being:** Scientific evidence indicates that spending time outdoors enhances physical and mental well-being, social and cognitive skills, creativity, and academic/work performance.
2. **Community Engagement:** Outdoor experiences promote community engagement, fostering a sense of belonging and connection among individuals and groups.
3. **Lifelong Learning:** Nature provides a rich environment for lifelong learning, enabling continuous personal growth and development.
4. **Climate Resilience:** Embracing nature fosters climate resilience, as it strengthens our understanding of and connection to the environment.

To support the expansion of outdoor time, HIKE.LEARN.BE. implements three distinct and independent initiatives:

1. **Park Play Camps for Kids:** Engaging and dynamic programs designed to provide children with memorable outdoor experiences in local parks.
2. **She Ascends Hiking and Wellness for Women:** Empowering women through hiking and wellness activities, promoting self-care, and nurturing personal growth.
3. **Natural Co-Design Projects for Communities:** Collaborative initiatives that involve communities in designing and implementing nature-focused projects, tailoring them to their unique needs and aspirations.

By championing these initiatives, HIKE.LEARN.BE. strives to make a lasting and positive impact on the lives of individuals and communities, fostering a deeper connection to nature, one another, and oneself.

Natural Co-Design Projects for Communities:

The intricate connection between schools and communities weaves a tapestry where schools reflect the very essence of community culture and values. Recognizing this interdependence, it becomes clear that engaging communities is vital for fostering positive change within the school environment. By embracing the interconnectedness of schools and communities, we can forge a powerful alliance that strengthens, supports, and even transforms both entities, ultimately enhancing outdoor experiences for all. Together, we have the potential to align our schools with future goals and visions, effectively serving students and their families.

Extensive research underscores the importance of a triangulated change process, involving an external change entity to facilitate communication and leverage resources within school districts and communities. Guided by the principles of Co-Design, HIKE.LEARN.BE (HLB) endeavors to empower schools and communities in driving an organic change process, from inception to completion, addressing the unique challenges and solutions inherent in the communities they serve. **In the case of the Detroit Lakes Public School System, they are actively seeking input on educational and community needs regarding the development of a parcel of land located north of town.**

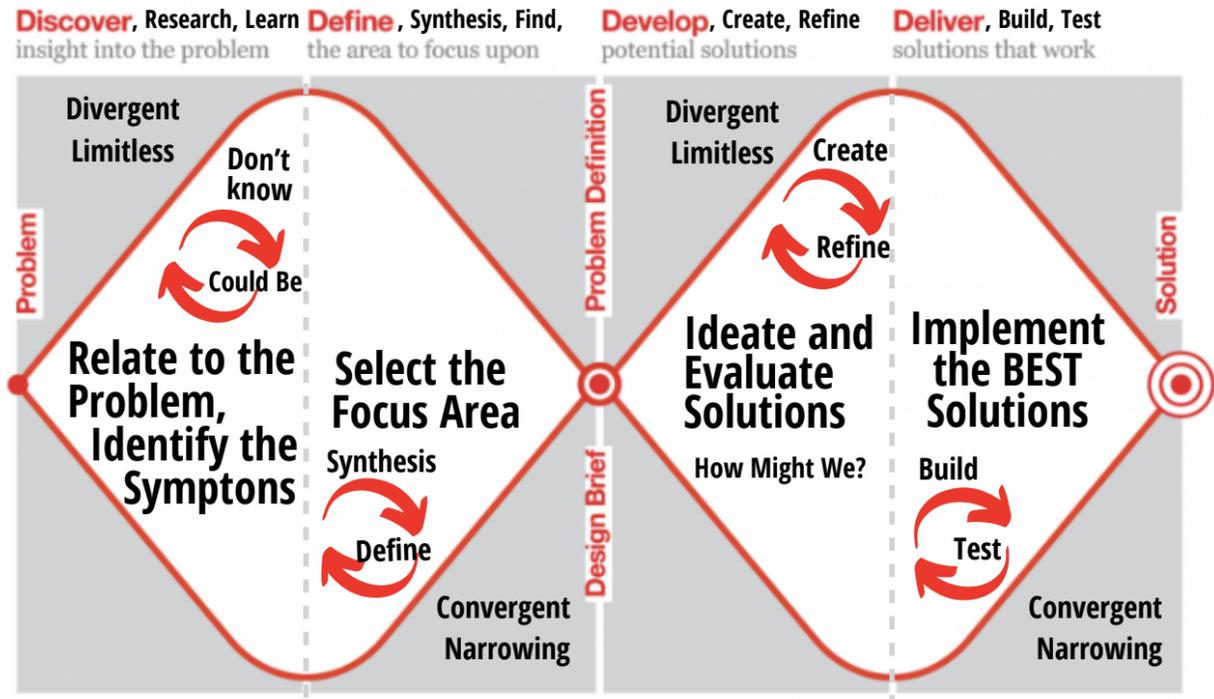
HLB, having been awarded a grant as part of the Regional Sustainable Development Partner Project, has joined forces with the University of Minnesota's School of Design to assist Detroit Lakes Public Schools in determining the optimal utilization of their land parcel.

Mark Jenson, the Superintendent of Detroit Lakes, recently concluded a district-wide construction project. However, as he contemplated the available spaces and potential school programming, he became intrigued by how district land assets could be leveraged to enhance student educational experiences. The challenge he encountered was determining how best to utilize the district's land located on the northern edge of town.

The question arose: Can we expand our outdoor programming offerings? Is there a possibility to delve into research, study, and design clean energy solutions for the community and beyond? Could we amplify the Pathway Production model at the high school academy and establish a clean energy lab that addresses barriers and develops energy solutions for the community and the state?

To tackle these inquiries and establish a clear vision, H.L.B initiated the process of organization and definition, employing a simple yet powerful design methodology that frames the root problem(s) to enable the implementation of the suitable solution(s). It's important to note that the process is not linear but rather fluid, with alternating phases of DivergentSpace and ConvergentSpace that ebb and flow, generating sustainable solutions. Each step encompasses its own mini-cycle, guiding the designers in defining and refining either the Problem or the

Solution. In this project, we adopted a double diamond design model and have successfully completed two of the four cycles: Discover and Define



Interpretation of Data

Initial Data

School Mission and Vision:

The mission of Detroit Lakes Public Schools is to foster the growth and potential of all learners within an environment that values lifelong learning, upholds excellence as the standard, and promotes continuous improvement.

The beliefs, which guide the decisions of the Detroit Lakes School Board, reflect our shared values:

- Education begins at birth and is the number one obligation of society, creating a caring, working partnership – children/students, community, family, and school.
- The educational environment should promote a feeling of self-worth in all children/students and other members of the partnership.
- We must seek means to allow students the opportunity to succeed.
- Education should develop programs that allow students to grow healthily, academically, artistically, emotionally, and physically.
- Every person learns, in different ways and at different times.
- Education is an investment, not an expense.
- Education must preserve and encourage freedom of thought, responsibility, and expression.
- The educational system, students, and community must be receptive to and able to accommodate change.
- Students and staff have the right to a safe and orderly school environment.
- Teachers should be dedicated, effective, and qualified professionals.
- Quality education requires ongoing staff development.
- Excellence should be encouraged, identified, and rewarded.
- Education should enhance the quality of life.
- Students should develop a positive work attitude that will prepare them to be productive citizens.
- Curriculum should be inclusive and respectful to all people and cultures.

By upholding these beliefs, Detroit Lakes Public Schools is committed to providing a transformative educational experience that empowers students to reach their full potential and become active community contributors.

Mark Jenson, Superintendent Initial Perceptions**Perceived Problem:**

Detroit Lakes currently possesses a parcel of land on the northern edge of the district, which holds great potential for outdoor programming. However, determining the best utilization and approach for this land presents a challenge.

The Superintendent's initial thoughts prior to the project:

Superintendent's Vision: The superintendent envisions the creation of an outdoor space where students can actively engage with renewable energy resources such as solar, wind, and hydropower. He also aims for the initiative to contribute to the betterment of the community.

Possible Considerations:

- How can we expand our existing outdoor programming to maximize the use of this land?
- Is there an opportunity to conduct research, study, and design clean energy solutions for the community and beyond?
- Can we further develop the pathway Production model at the high school academy and establish a clean energy lab that identifies barriers and generates energy solutions for the community and the state?

Social Impact: The superintendent believes that by providing students with the opportunity to interact with renewable energy sources, the district and community can collectively benefit. As carbon emissions continue to pose a threat to our environment, educating students about the advantages of renewable energy sources becomes increasingly vital.

Financial Impact: The superintendent believes implementing this vision would initially incur costs for installing solar panels, and wind turbines, and creating year-round outdoor classroom space. However, once completed, the energy generated could offset the initial development expenses and potentially generate revenue for the district. This financial impact can turn the land into a profitable asset.

The superintendent believes by addressing these aspects and capitalizing on the potential of the land, Detroit Lakes can establish an inspiring outdoor space that allows students to actively engage with renewable energy, benefiting both the community and the district financially, socially, and environmentally.

Parcel of Land Under Consideration:

Parcel 497001032
Section 15 Township 139 Range 041
UNPLATTED D.L. CITY

15-139-041 PT GOVT LOT 8 & PT SE1/4 SE1/4: COMM E QTR COR SEC 15 TH S 724.75' TO POB; W 1332.43', S 590' TO S LN GOVT LOT 8, SELY 805.10', SE 118', S 111', WLY 55', SWLY 116.86', S 448' TO CTR LN TOWER RD, E 40', N 455', E 917' TO E LN SE1/4 SE1/4, N 1455.32' TO POB REF 08.0245.002 IN 2008



The Detroit Lakes Public School District purchased the land at the intersection of Richwood Road and Tower Road, located north of 34 on Richwood Road, approximately 1.6 miles to the west side of Richwood Road in ----- . The final sale of the land was priced at \$525,000.

The land is conveniently situated, being approximately 2.9 miles or a 7-minute drive from DL High School, and approximately 2.5 miles or a 6-minute drive from the ALC, MS, and Roosevelt schools. Moreover, the land is approximately 3.4 miles away, with an 8-minute drive to Rossman.

In the 2013 and 2016 referendums, there was a proposal to build a K-3 elementary (2013) or a middle school (2016) on this land. However, the referendum failed due to concerns raised by a propane company located across the road. It was noted that the proposed schools would have been built 1,800 feet from the facility, which exceeded the federal protocol for distance requirements.

Furthermore, a propane truck in Callaway was involved in a train collision, resulting in a massive explosion. This incident likely had an impact on the voting and raised concerns regarding the safety and explosiveness of propane.

Currently, the district is leasing approximately 30 acres of land to a farmer.

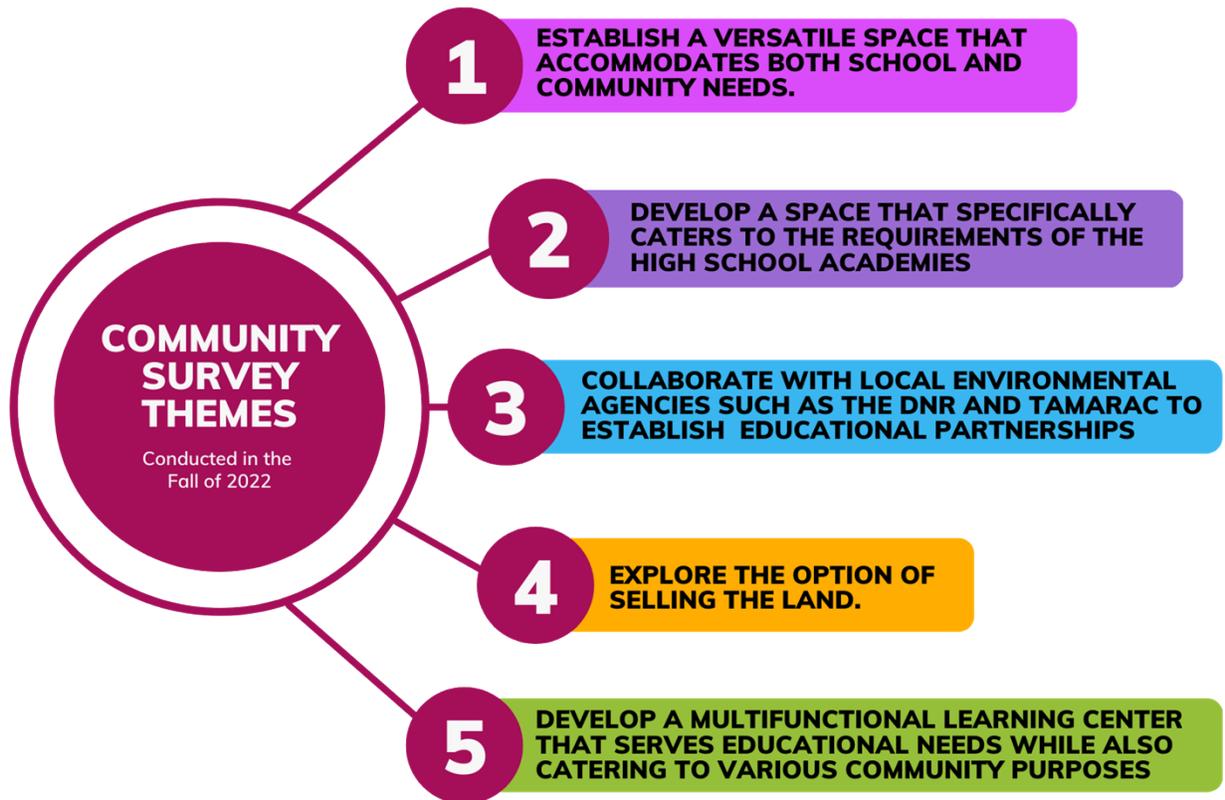
Survey, Interviews, Co-design Sessions

Insufficient time dedicated to understanding the needs of the people often leads to the failure of a project or initiative. Embracing a human-centered design approach empowers you to gain a deep understanding of human thoughts and behaviors. By leveraging this understanding, you can

reframe challenges and gain newfound clarity. This approach is particularly valuable in addressing problems that involve people since such problems inherently possess a subjective nature. Taking the time to truly empathize with and understand the perspectives, challenges, and aspirations of the individuals involved ensures that your project or initiative aligns with their actual needs and yields successful outcomes.

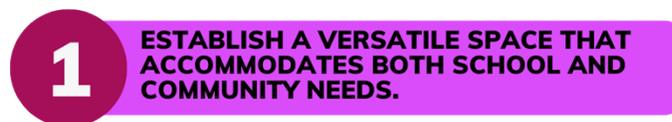
The following key findings emerged from a comprehensive community engagement process, including a community survey, interviews, and a community co-design session.

In collaboration with the University of Minnesota Design School and HIKE.LEARN.BE, a **community survey** was developed and distributed in the fall of 2022 (specifically on October 1, 2022). This survey aimed to gather insights and perspectives from the community. During the survey analysis, several recurring themes began to surface.



Quotes from the Survey:

Please note that similar thoughts and ideas have been blended to create an overall statement.



“Align the space to encourage the community and schools to become more active”

“By promoting and supporting outdoor endeavors, we can contribute to the overall health and vitality of both the community and schools”

2

DEVELOP A SPACE THAT SPECIFICALLY CATERES TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIES

“The land should be used to align with the high school academies to increase the depth of our high school programming”

“Create internships that allow students to work with Tamarac and the DNR wetlands. Then have students showcase their capstone projects at the end of the year”

3

COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCIES SUCH AS THE DNR AND TAMARAC TO ESTABLISH EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

“Partner with Tamarac and Wetland DNR to develop and implement an EC-8 curriculum that feeds into the Academy program”

4

EXPLORE THE OPTION OF SELLING THE LAND.

“The distance is too great from schools and students would always have to be transported”

“The School District needs a district office and EC center more than it needs a nature center”

“We have the DNR Wetlands, Detroit. Mountain and Tamarac we do not need to spend money to duplicate what is already done in the community”

5

DEVELOP A MULTIFUNCTIONAL LEARNING CENTER THAT SERVES EDUCATIONAL NEEDS WHILE ALSO CATERING TO VARIOUS COMMUNITY PURPOSES

“A flexible space could encourage more outdoor community and school events”

Key community members were selected for individual interviews based on the recommendations provided by the district and the insights gathered from the survey. These interviews were conducted between November 2022 and January 2023, facilitated by Mindi Jenson. The purpose of these interviews was to delve deeper into the themes that emerged from the community survey, allowing for a more comprehensive exploration and reinforcement of the identified findings. Although no new themes emerged, it is worth noting that historical events and circumstances have played a pivotal role in shaping community perceptions regarding the parcel of land currently under review.

Please note: *After conducting interviews Themes 1 and 5 were merged as one theme*



After additional conversations, the data collected was compared to prevalent theories and or research:

The Academy model uniquely integrates an academic curriculum with career-themed instruction and work-based learning opportunities. Attending and completing programs within a network of "academy" model schools can significantly increase graduation rates for high school students at risk of dropping out, surpassing their better-positioned peers. Theme 1 - Developing a space that specifically caters to the requirements of the High School Academies is valid and will continue on to the co-design session.

Scientific findings indicate that the conversion of school grounds into nature-rich environments serves as a potent tool for enhancing physical and mental well-being, fostering social and cognitive skills, stimulating creativity, and improving academic performance. The opportunity for children and young people to play, learn, and thrive in natural school settings enables them to develop a connection with nature and, in turn, become advocates for its preservation and the protection of its inhabitants, which is crucial for taking action against climate change mitigation. Theme 2 - Collaborating with local environmental agencies such as the DNR, and Tamarac for

the purpose of remaining green space and educating the community is a valid theme that should be investigated further in the co-design process.

The competition for limited and environmentally fragile resources in desirable landscapes presents a significant modern challenge. The notion of unlimited space and resources for recreational amenities is no longer seen as valid, as people and communities now recognize the need to contend for recreational space. The findings show that land acquisition will continue to be expensive as the prices will continue to go up, decreasing the ability to purchase environmentally fragile resources in the future. Selling the parcel of land may have financial implications further in the future. Although this theme appears to be invalid for the school district to pursue, for the purpose of co-design theme 3 will remain in the co-design process.

A community school is a type of educational institution that intentionally establishes coordinated partnerships with various community resources. These schools employ a collaborative and evidence-based strategy to cultivate relationships between student learning supports and a wide range of community partners, programs, and social services. The ultimate goal is to enhance equity of opportunity by addressing local needs and promoting student achievement and success. As a result of their involvement with community schools, children and families experience noticeable improvements in academic performance and overall well-being. Theme 4 - Developing a multifunctional learning center that serves educational needs while also catering to various community purposes appears to fall under creating a community school. This theme will remain in the co-design process.

Following the initial two community inquiries (survey and interviews), a design question was formulated specifically for the community co-design session.

Design Question:

How can we maximize the flexible utilization of the land to cater to both the community's and the school's needs?

Drawing upon the valuable insights gained from the survey and interviews, Detroit Lakes Public Schools invited selected community members to take part in a community co-design session. This session, which took place in May of 2023, fostered collaboration and aimed to involve the community in the design process actively. The primary objective was to incorporate their input, ideas, and perspectives into the development of future plans and initiatives.

During both sessions, we used the MoSCow Method.

The MoSCoW method is a four-step approach that helps prioritize project requirements to maximize return on investment. It is an acronym derived from must have, should have, could have, and will not have, with the “Os” purpose of making it more easily pronounced.

Various fields and disciplines utilize the MoSCoW method, as it allows all project stakeholders to determine the order in which tasks should be completed. This approach helps in achieving objectives such as reducing operational costs, improving productivity, and enhancing user satisfaction.

Prioritizing requirements enables project teams to gain a better understanding of the effort and resources required for each project component. This knowledge facilitates effective time management, enhances project manageability, and increases the likelihood of meeting deadlines. The MoSCoW method is also referred to as MoSCoW analysis, MoSCoW prioritization, MoSCoW technique, and MoSCoW rules.

The following was co-created during the community co-design sessions:

Session A

“Must Have” going forward

- Wetlands need to be protected and enhanced
- There must be a community impact for all ages and abilities and cultures
- Land must be readied for the final project - legal aspects
- Some sort of gardening
- Some sort of structure with bathrooms
- Excellent safety and security
- Parking for buses

“Should Have” going forward

- Trails that tie into existing trails
- An educational purpose
- Something new and unique to the community
- The ability to be used year round
- Classrooms that can be utilized year round
- Partnerships that help with usage and upkeep

“Could Have” going forward

- A fire tower overlook
- A tourism draw
- A revenue source
- A ropes course or other business team-building capabilities
- A hired position to oversee programming
- Multiple funding avenues

“Won’t Have” moving forward

- Lots of pavement
- Noise or light pollution
- Single-use

Session B

“Must Have” moving forward

- Understand what all community non-profits already do to avoid duplication and harness partnerships
- Understand the adjacent properties (needs and limitations)
- Identify DLPS needs: Answer will the end project be a school “thing” or community “thing”
- Know who the user is before moving forward
- Maintain being a champion of outdoor education
- Have a solid sustainability plan
- Have a solid vision

“Should Have” moving forward

- A strong cultural component that embraces opportunities for all ages and abilities. Create something unique to our district - community
- Be able to show the viability of the project to the community
- Plan with community partners

“Could Have” moving forward

- A sustainable revenue stream
- Bathrooms/parking
- Trails that connect to existing trails - biking and walking
- Natural gardens (Fruit Guilds)
- Look into a focus of natural art, science, and mental health
- A strong strategy to increase outdoor learning

“Won’t Have” moving forward

- Not a site for a new school
- No negative financial impact on the school
- Should not wait for everyone to be on board

Recommendation in Moving Forward:

In the initial stages of the design process (Discover Define), there was a consistent concept of incorporating a significant Native American cultural element into the project's final outcome. Based on this discovery, HLB suggests that the Detroit Lakes Public School engage in a co-design session with the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC) within the district

before proceeding to subsequent stages. This session will provide an opportunity for their voices to be heard and considered in the parameters that will shape the creation and ideation process.

Similarly, in the initial stages of the design process (Discover Define), there was a prevailing notion of including high school students' perspectives. In light of this finding, HLB recommends that the Detroit Lakes Public School organize a co-design session involving various high school student groups. This will ensure that their voices are taken into account when establishing the parameters for the project and generating ideas.

To further refine the parameters for the upcoming stages, HLB suggests that the School Board, along with key administrators, participate in a Co-Design Session. This session should take place once all the co-design meetings have concluded. It will allow the Board and administrative team to fine-tune the parameters that will guide the subsequent phases of the project.

Building upon the parameters established in the co-design sessions, HLB recommends the intentional integration of the next two stages of the design process with Academy teachers and students. This innovative and noteworthy process will set a precedent for developing community infrastructures in communities engaged in a community co-design process.

Furthermore, HLB suggests exploring the possibility of extending the partnership with HLB in order to access matching funds from the University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships continuation grant received for the year 2023-24. These matching funds can be utilized to facilitate co-design meetings and provide University design support for the Academy work, which will ultimately contribute to the success of student capstone projects.

Lastly, HLB would like to assist the Detroit Lakes School System in identifying federal community infrastructure grants that can be utilized to fund the implementation of the final project.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Detroit Lakes Public School for their partnership with us this year. Projects such as this one hold the potential to bring about transformative change in the way communities develop community infrastructure, as well as positively impact our social and emotional well-being as members of the community.

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS SUMMARY PAGE

Project Funded By:

The University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships Grant

Partners:

HIKE LEARN Be Mindi Jenson

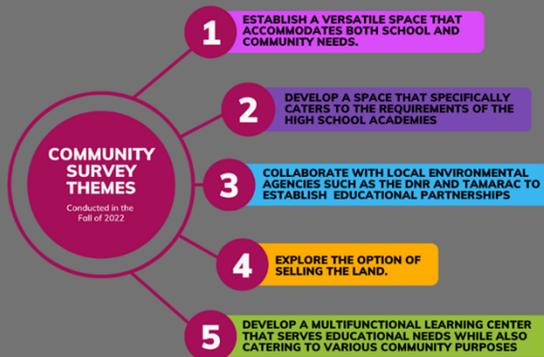
Detroit Lakes Public Schools: Superintendent Mark Jenson

University of Minnesota School of Design: Emily Stove

Design Guidelines For Future Considerations

The following is a comprehensive exploratory project utilizing design principles, this guide is designed specifically for Detroit Lakes Public Schools.

FINDINGS 1



FINDINGS 2

After conducting interviews Themes 1 and 5 were merged as one theme. After additional conversations, the data collected was compared to prevalent theories and or research, and all 4 themes were moved forward to the community co-design process

FINDINGS 3

The key takeaways from the community Co-design sessions include:

"Must Have" going forward:

- Protection and enhancement of wetlands.
- Community impact for people of all ages, abilities, and cultures.
- Preparation of land for the final project, considering legal aspects.
- Understanding the needs and limitations of adjacent properties.
- Identifying the target users before proceeding.
- Continued emphasis on outdoor education.
- Maintaining a strong vision.

RECOMENDATIONS

- Hold a co-design session with the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee
- Hold a co-design session involving various high school student groups
- To further refine the parameters for the upcoming stages, hold a co-design session with board members and key administrators (work session)
- Building upon the parameters established in the co-design sessions bring in Academy teachers and students next to continue the next two stages of the design process.
- Extend the partnership with HLB and MRSDP for another fiscal year to leverage a dollar match to continue the design process.

[The Salzburg Statement for Greening School Grounds & Outdoor Learning](#)

Stansfield, C.A. (1973), "Trends in public recreational land management in the United States", *The Tourist Review*, Vol. 28 No. 4, pp. 134-142.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/eb057688>

[Academy' Model Boosts High School Grad Rate for At-Risk Students, Study Says](#)

[Schools and Communities Working Together: Features and Impacts of Community Schools](#)