

**College Community Schools  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa  
December, 2004**

**Educational Specifications Document**

The purpose of this document is to provide information for those interested in the educational specifications for College Community Schools' proposed 7-9 school building. Its intent is to present a brief overview of the program requirements and facilities necessary to meet the learning and developmental needs of its students as well as the District's goals, priorities, policies, and practices. This document serves as an expression of what the district values, its beliefs, by articulating specific school design recommendations.

**District Mission**

The mission of the College Community Schools is to ensure quality learning today for tomorrow.

**Educational Values and Beliefs**

Consistent with its mission, a strong enduring focus for the design of this proposed 7-9 school building is best expressed through the following fourteen (14) educational values. All design decisions should support and facilitate the successful implementation of these values.

<b>Educational Value</b>	<b>Belief Statement</b>
Learning Focus	We believe that improving student learning is the driving focus of the school.
Personalized Learning	We believe that there must be programs and processes in place to honor and support the academic, emotional, and social needs of each student.  We believe that an advisor-advisee program, unique to each grade level, must ensure that each student has a personal adult advocate.  We believe that an advisor-advisee program should be grade specific, curriculum-based, and include daily contact.
Parent Partnerships	We believe that parents are partners in all aspects of each student's learning process—academic achievement, social-emotional development, home-school communications, and school transitions.
Small Learning Communities	We believe that teams of students and teachers working in smaller learning communities strengthen relationships,

	<p>better meet student needs, and produce improved student achievement.</p> <p>We believe students must feel trusted and independent.</p>
Academic Rigor and High Expectations	<p>We believe that all students must be expected to achieve standards within an academically rigorous curriculum.</p> <p>We believe that students must meet academic accountability requirements to pass from 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade.</p> <p>We believe that each student must have access to basic academic skill support services.</p> <p>We believe that all students must be challenged to grow and achieve to the maximum of their ability.</p>
Relevant Academic and Career Exploration	<p>We believe that all students must be provided authentic learning opportunities that reflect real world situations, decision-making, and planning.</p> <p>We believe that all students must experience learning opportunities to investigate and discover their interests and talents.</p>
Effective Curriculum and Instruction	<p>We believe that all students must be engaged in relevant and rigorous learning experiences that equip them with basic academic and life skills.</p> <p>We believe that each school program must be based on best practices and tailored to individual students' needs, talents, and skills.</p> <p>We believe that curriculum flexibility, whether theme-based, project-based, technology-based, hands-on based, or experiment-based, is critical in meeting diverse learner needs.</p>
Activities	<p>We believe that it is important to offer students activities that afford each student an opportunity to grow and be challenged at an appropriate skill level.</p>

Learning Partnerships	We believe that strong, mutually beneficial partnerships between the school and the community enrich students' school experiences across the curriculum.
Positive School Culture and Climate	<p>We believe that the school must be characterized by respect, open communication, inclusion, and a celebration of diversity.</p> <p>We believe that all students, families, faculty, and staff feel welcomed, accepted, and are treated as partners.</p>
Flexible Structure	We believe that the school community must be able to take advantage of the building's flexible structure.
Transitions	<p>We believe that the school must provide smooth transitions from grade to grade with increasing expectations and responsibilities while respecting the diversity that accompanies the unique needs of adolescents.</p> <p>We believe that school programs must be tailored to individual student needs and skills, and change as students change.</p>
Collaboration	We believe that everyone associated with the school must work and learn collaboratively in a team environment to realize the school and community's hopes for its students.
Aesthetics	We believe that the school must project a warm, appealing, and inviting environment to all, and reflect the school's values and focus.

### **Recommended Value-Based Design Actions**

**Educational Values:** Learning Focus

**Recommended Design Actions:**

- 1. Accessibility to technology to allow flexible access to a wide range of resources**
- 2. Obvious and visible emphasis on learning in general purpose areas.**
- 3. General purpose areas designed and equipped to accommodate large and small group professional development and/or other group usage**
- 4. Wireless access**
- 5. Student work must be prominently visible everywhere in a wide variety of formats.**

**Educational Value:** Personalized Learning

**Recommended Design Actions:**

1. Spaces to allow for daily advisory program
2. Smaller teams located in smaller community areas

**Educational Value:** Parent Partnerships

**Recommended Design Actions:**

1. Adequate and accessible parking as well as entry into the building for both school day access as well as extra curricular activities.
2. Work space to be used by parent volunteers
3. Spaces that can be used for smaller groups, but can also be converted to be used for larger groups and assemblies (see flexible structure)

**Educational Value:** Small Learning Communities

**Recommended Design Actions:**

1. Board policy class targets of 24 per each grade must be met.
2. Emphasis on relationship building design factors
3. Grade levels separated. Teams separated to create smaller feeling environment (whole child grades 7 & 8, more emphasis on curricular in grade 9)

**Educational Value:** Academic Rigor and High Expectations

**Recommended Design Actions:**

1. Computer application rooms
2. Modular learning areas and modules to allow for career exploration
3. Proximity to allow for grade or course acceleration
4. Space for a “learning academy” to address the academic needs of students who are delayed in their achievement and need additional support.
5. Computer labs located in/or around the IMC
6. Collaboration space for students who are accelerated to work with one another on projects.

**Educational Value:** Relevant Academic and Career Exploration

**Recommended Design Actions:**

1. Grade level project rooms
2. Modular exploratory areas

**Educational Value:** Effective Curriculum and Instruction

**Recommended Design Actions:**

1. Classrooms arranged to promote interdisciplinary teaming at all grade levels
2. Books shelves and multiple white boards in all classrooms
3. Video projection equipment in all relevant classrooms. i.e., Computer instruction

**Educational Value:** Activities

**Recommended Design Actions:**

1. Facilities to provide opportunity for a variety of fine arts and athletic activities through flexible and multi purpose spaces.

2. **Parking adjacent to and able to accommodate the various activities.**
3. **Allow 9<sup>th</sup> grade students to participate in high school activities.**
4. **Enclosed and monitored area for students to wait for rides following practices and activities.**

**Educational Value:** Learning Partnerships

**Recommended Design Actions:**

1. **Design of team areas to encourage collaboration and interdisciplinary partnerships**
2. **Special education classrooms within the team settings to discourage a feeling of segregation between regular ed and special ed.**

**Educational Value:** Positive School Culture and Climate

**Recommended Design Actions:**

1. **Open, bright and inviting entry, hallways and common areas.**
2. **Display areas for student work**
3. **Accessibility of the IMC to all parts of the building and located near the front entrance to encourage before and after school use.**
4. **Accessibility of Administration and Guidance area to the front entrance.**

**Educational Value:** Flexible Structure

**Recommended Design Actions:**

1. **Spaces that can be used for smaller groups, but can also be converted to be used for larger groups and assemblies.**
2. **Commonly used areas in centralized locations.**
3. **Cafeteria of adequate size and design and staffing to allow students to be served, return trays and still have time to access an area for social or physical activities.**

**Educational Value:** Transitions

**Recommended Design Actions:**

1. **Grade level team areas and student classrooms should be positioned within the building structure to honor coherent transitions over the three grade level span.**

**Educational Value:** Collaboration

**Recommended Design Actions:**

1. **Both student and staff collaboration areas to allow for the enhanced learning opportunities made possible through people working together. (Project rooms, teacher and student teaming room spaces)**

**Educational Value:** Aesthetics

**Recommended Design Actions:**

1. **As many instructional areas as possible with outside exposure (windows or skylights).**
2. **Style and class balanced with functionality and value.**
3. **Hallways and other parts of the building color coded for ease of navigation for both new students and visitors.**