

A word cloud centered around the words 'community' and 'school', which are the largest and most prominent. Other significant words include 'education', 'innovation', 'connected', 'services', 'respect', 'achieve', 'networks', 'support', 'rural', 'balance', 'goals', 'outreach', 'bridging', 'teachers', 'backgrounds', 'sustainability', 'science', 'programs', 'parents', 'educators', 'engage', 'welcoming', 'life', 'technology', 'invest', 'team', 'family', 'curriculum', 'math', 'diversity', 'wellness', 'growth', 'arts', 'believe', 'sponsor', 'recreation', 'success', and 'opportunity'. The words are arranged in various orientations and sizes, creating a dense and interconnected visual field.

COMMUNITY School:  
DEVELOPMENT of a Rural School into a COMMUNITY CENTER

A DESIGN THESIS Submitted to the  
DEPARTMENT of ARCHITECTURE and LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
of NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

By:

ASHLEY HUDSON

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Bachelors of  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



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Primary Thesis Advisor



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May 2011. Fargo, North Dakota

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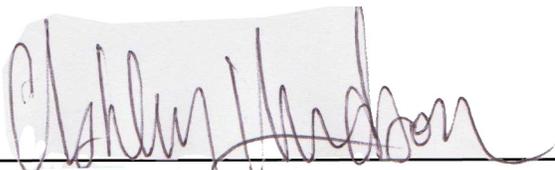
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# STATEMENT OF INTENT

## Abstract:

This thesis is intended to transfer urban theory to a rural place in such a way that it respects rural systems, and the result will be a hybrid solution. A design process will be set up to investigate the possibilities of the development of a rural school into a full-service “Community School.” The desired result is strong community engagement and the successful incorporation of entities that will increase the number and quality of services in the school district as a whole. In this process, the developmental stages will be approached in such a way that creates an armature for a small rural development that can grow as needed. Research presented throughout this document supports the theory that “integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement leads to improved student learning, stronger families, and healthier communities.” (McKoy, Bierbaum, & Vincent, 2009, pg 5).

**Key Words:**  
Urban Theory, Hybrid Solution,  
Youth and Community Development,  
Community School.

# Statement of Intent

## Problem Statement:

Can development of a Community School diminish disconnections between rural towns, increase community engagement within the school, and provide a facility that supports youth and community development



# STATEMENT of INTENT

## Project Typology:

A “COMMUNITY School” is an “elementary or secondary school that works with its local educational agency and community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and other public or private entities to provide a coordinated and integrated set of comprehensive academic, social, and health services that respond to the needs of its students, students’ family members, and community members”  
(U.S. Department of, 2010).

## THE CLAIM:

A hybrid solution that focuses on all aspects of youth and community development will lead to improved student learning, stronger families, and healthier communities.

## PREMISES:

The existing Northern Cass School was built in a centralized location between six rural towns, on the belief that by uniting the small communities a stronger approach to the development of their youth can be offered.  
(Celebrate Our Heritage 1881-2006, 2006.)

As it stands today, the existing communities lie disconnected from this potential COMMUNITY School. “Schools will become Centers of Community Life that invest in our community and create connections across the differences that would otherwise divide us” –Emeryville Center for Community Life  
(McKoy, Bierbaum, & Vincent, 2009, pg 8)

An important benefit of full-service COMMUNITY schools in rural areas is facility access and use. School facilities, like local governmental agencies, are financed largely by local tax dollars. It seems to make good economic sense where resources are scarce to co-locate those services that support learning and family involvement rather than adding additional strain to local economies to build and maintain multiple facilities that stand idle a majority of the time (Williams, 2006).

## THEORETICAL PREMISE/UNIFYING IDEA:

Rural schools are expected to provide a quality education for all students while overcoming challenges such as transportation barriers, strained resources, and lack of access to needed services. Full-service COMMUNITY schools may provide the greatest opportunity for quality education and success in rural communities where resources are few. COMMUNITY schools offer a much-needed alternative to traditional schooling models even in rural communities that are not economically stressed (Williams, 2006).

# Statement of Intent

## Project Justification:

The future of our communities and society lies in the hands of our youth. This theory places much importance on the education and development of these youth. Creation of a community school that offers a variety of educational, recreational, cultural, and social opportunities, as well as services, will create a program that further supports a youth/community relationship (McKoy, Bierbaum, & Vincent, 2009).

# The Proposal

Narrative

User/Client Description

Major Project Elements

Site Information

Project Emphasis

A Plan for Proceeding

Previous Studio Experience

# The Proposal

## Narrative:

An integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement will produce a hybrid solution for developing an existing rural school into a Community School. The existing Northern Cass facility is centrally located between six small towns that create the school district. The school's address is Hunter, ND, one of the six small towns located just under eight miles northwest of the facility. Distance between the school and the communities creates a physical disconnection. This disconnection has also been apparent among the relationships of the students, parents, teachers, and administration. (Burgad, 2011).

Community schools might be the most economically feasible option in low-resource, rural areas. Residents from these small towns travel from areas where access to community institutions such as libraries, parks, recreation centers, and theaters is limited or nonexistent. Addition of certain amenities to the individual small communities is next to impossible and would only strain the existing economy. A Community School would provide resources and opportunities to all the small towns and be a centralized location for community engagement.

Rural schools are expected to provide a quality education for all students while overcoming challenges such as transportation barriers, strained resources, and lack of access to needed services. School districts depend primarily upon funding made available by local, state, and federal policymakers. The ability to attract and retain effective teachers, provide and maintain suitable facilities, and have children enter school ready to learn are all issues that extend beyond the school itself. These issues take on particular significance in rural areas, and all sectors of the community and all levels of government must see them as a shared responsibility (Williams, 2006).

Does the established structure and program of the school hold potential for community growth? Furthermore, is the development of a Community School beneficial to the existing school and communities? "Integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement leads to improved student learning, stronger families, and healthier communities" (McKoy, Bierbaum, & Vincent, 2009, pg 5).

# The Proposal

## User/Client Description:

### The Facility:

#### Academic/Library:

One of the main features that was promoted at this time was that the academic areas of the facility would be built around a “house” concept. This concept allows for separation of K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12 students to their own “houses”. In essence, these groupings would allow students to have limited interaction with other age groups, yet keep them close to their own age group and have their own space that they can call their own, hence the “house” concept. Each house would have its own Tech Resource area (this large room in each of the houses where teachers have the opportunity to do team teaching or teaching across the curriculum), that the industrial tech/art/lab, business and life science lab would be readily accessible and developed to display students’ work in the viewing gallery, that the library would have separation of elementary and junior high/senior high libraries, and that it would serve as the media center or the facility.

#### Administrative/Special Services

Promoted here was the fact that the school counselor, special services and administrative services would be readily and easily accessible to the public. The teacher workroom would have two entrances, which allows for access to this area at any time for teachers. Principal offices were designed for monitoring traffic to and from the building.

#### Athletic/Auditorium/Commons/Music

Here were features such as a basketball court that would seat over 500, an elementary gym that would also have a full size volleyball court, weight room for student and public use, a state-of-the-art auditorium to be used for musical and drama productions, that this auditorium would seat up to 400 (later downsized to 287 seats), dressing rooms which would also function as community locker rooms, a commons area which would have many uses including: dance line practice, cheerleading practice, dances, lunch area and a general gathering area and individual practice rooms for bands as well as a media-lab.

#### Public Use Functions/Site Plan Functions

A feature the building committee considered during this process was that of how the public/patrons would be able to use this facility. Some of the highlights were that the library/media center, weight room, gyms, commons and the auditorium would be available for public use. Students would not have to cross any roads when dropped off by buses. Additionally, elementary students would not have to cross any roads when accessing the playground. (Celebrate our heritage, 2006)

# User / Client Description

## Current Students/New Students:

The community school serves the sole purpose of educating the youth of the Northern Cass District. Students will use the facility during hours of school operation. Outside school hours the facility is open to students for use of any extracurricular activities, recreation, and educational use.

## Teachers/Administration:

Use of the facility is for their career of educating the youth as well as maintaining a center of community in hopes of building stronger families and healthier communities. Recreational functions, medical, and any furthering educational uses are available for the user.

## Parents:

This is a place where their children are educated and prepared for their adult future. Through community and school activities the parents can connect with other parents, community members, and teachers. Recreational functions, medical, and any furthering educational uses are available for the user.

## Community Members:

This is the center of community, providing services that better the quality of life in the Northern Cass communities. An area where connections can be made both physically and emotionally across the six communities. Recreational functions, medical, and any furthering educational uses are available for the user.

## Service Providers:

This user is either from the surrounding community or has become part of the community in terms of the relationship created through services provided. Recreational functions, medical, and any furthering educational uses are available for the user.

# User / Client Description

## HUNTER:

Population: 312

Average household size: 2.3 people

# of family households: 141

Of which 24.8% had children under the age of 18 living with them (34)

## Arthur:

Population: 387

Average household size: 2.6 people

# of family households: 129

Of which 38.8% had children under the age of 18 living with them (50)

## Argusville:

Population: 137

Average household size: 2.4

# of family households: 62

Of which 32.3% had children under the age of 18 living with them (20)

## GARDNER:

Population: 87

Average household size: 2.3

# of family households: 35

Of which 31.4% had children under the age of 18 living with them (11)

## GRANDIN:

Population: 169

Average household size: 2.5

# of family households: 72

Of which 32.9% had children under the age of 18 living with them (23)

## ERIE:

Population: 72

Average household size: 2.2

# of family households: 29

Of which 20.7% had children under the age of 18 living with them (6)

(Citydata.com)

# The Proposal

## Major Project Elements:

**Creation of a well rounded curriculum:**  
How can this school provide the best possible education for its users? A well rounded curriculum will prepare a student for post secondary education or provide them with the skills to enter the work force. How can Northern Cass set a standard that other rural schools want to follow?

**Creation of a Center for Community:**  
Provide a coordinated and integrated set of comprehensive academic, social, and health services that respond to the needs of its students, students' family members, and community members. Diminish the disconnections presently found among the rural towns of the Northern Cass community.

**Physical development opportunities within surrounding landscape:**  
Landscape features and land use surrounding the school will limit the physical possibilities of the development of this new community.

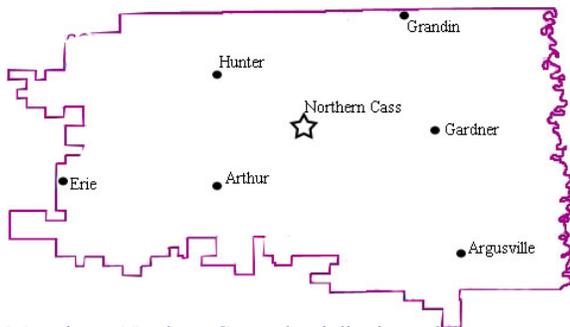
# The Proposal

## Site Information:

Northern Cass School (K-12) was built in 1997, just under 7 miles northwest of Gardner, North Dakota, off Interstate 29. Currently surrounding the school is a bus barn, a baseball and football field, running track, three neighboring farmsteads and miles of farmland.



Map shows school location within the state of North Dakota. Courtesy of google.



Map shows Northern Cass school district and the towns within it. Courtesy of google.



Aerial photo of the K-12 facility. Photo courtesy of Northern Cass web site.

Northern Cass School District recognizes the importance of planning, accountability, and the need to develop a roadmap that guides the school district in decision-making policies and education initiatives. This sets the foundation for a school program that can further develop with the best interest of the education of youth and the quality of the communities in mind. Location outside any city limits opens the possibilities to develop another supporting community around the school.

The school district is comprised of the following six small communities: Hunter, Arthur, Gardner, Grandin, Argusville, and Erie. The combined population of the district's communities is estimated to be around 1,150 people (Citydata.com).

According to information obtained from Julie Keckler, business manager of Northern Cass School, the school was built to accommodate 600 students and currently enrolls 534. Of these 534 students currently enrolled, 105 students are openly enrolled from other communities (Northern Cass School, 2010).

"We provide educational opportunities which challenge all students to reach their maximum potential"  
-Northern Cass School

# The Proposal

## Project Emphasis:

The main goal of this project is to investigate the possibilities of developing a the Northern Cass school into to a community school. A community school that will place much emphasis on the education of its youth, community development, and community engagement, in hopes of improved student learning, stronger families, and a healthier community. Designing a community school will foster this healthier community and develop a strong community-school connection that will mutually benefit all participants (McKoy, Bierbaum, & Vincent, 2009)

This thesis will explore opportunities for development of a community school. Exploration will not cease at the facilities needed to house such an endeavor, but will explore the activities that take place creating the sense of community. Research for design will account for sensitivity to the existing environment such as the agricultural land that surrounds it and the small-town values upheld by the community members.

# The Proposal

## A Plan for Proceeding:

This thesis will utilize an in-depth, quantitative/qualitative research approach. Research will be done on the theoretical premise, project typology, historical context, site analysis, and programmatic requirements.

The research direction will be guided by the premises and dictated by the theoretical premise/unifying idea. Emphasis of research will be on the possibilities of developing of an existing school into a community school as well as the elements needed to develop a school oriented community that will be mutually beneficial for all participants.

Documentation will be done throughout the research phase of this project and continued into the design process.

Qualitative information will be gathered from visiting the site and surrounding communities, and will include interviews with (but not limited to) school administration, support staff, teachers, and community members, as well as an investigation of surrounding school districts and schools that share the same vision. Quantitative data will be collected from reliable sources such as books, journals, archives, and government documents and cited accurately. Scientific and statistical data from these sources will be analyzed and presented graphically and through text in the thesis.

# The Proposal

## PREVIOUS STUDIO EXPERIENCE:

2nd Year. Fall 2007. Kathleen Pepple

KENNEDY COURT. Fargo ND  
Walster Hall. NDSU Campus. Fargo, ND

2nd Year. Spring 2008. Mark Lindquist.

PIONEER PARK RE-DESIGN. Valley City, ND  
MAIN STREET CUT THROUGH PARK DESIGN. Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

3rd Year. Fall 2008. Stevie Famulari.

FARGO DIKE PROJECT - FORM OVER FUNCTION. Fargo, ND  
SYMPHONIC ALLEY - METAL REVERBERATIONS. Fargo, ND

3rd Year. Spring 2009. Kathleen Pepple.

BATTLE LAKE PARK REDEVELOPMENT. Battle Lake, MN  
RESIDENTIAL SCALE SUSTAINABILITY. Fargo, ND  
CROSSROADS COMMUNITY GARDENS CHARENTE. Fargo, ND

4th Year. Fall 2009. Mark Lindquist.

SANDY BOULEVARD. Portland, OR  
McCORMICK & BAXTER - URBAN BOARDWALK. Portland, OR

4th Year. Spring 2010. Stevie Famulari.

ACID CANYON - PHYTOREMEDIATION. Los Alamos, NM  
HESCO BASKETS LONG-TERM FLOOD PROTECTION. Fargo, ND

5th Year. Fall 2010. Cathrine Wiley.

SHEYENNE NATIONAL GRASSLANDS. North Dakota

# Program Document

RESEARCH RESULTS AND GOALS  
CASE STUDIES  
HISTORICAL CONTEXT  
GOALS  
SITE ANALYSIS  
PROGRAMMATIC REQUIREMENTS  
REFERENCE LIST

# The Program

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND GOALS

RESEARCH OF:

THEORETICAL PREMISE & UNIFYING IDEA

TYPOLOGICAL

CASE STUDIES

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

# The Program

## Theoretical Premise

Research supporting the theoretical premise of this thesis required the investigation of the pros and cons of a school such as Northern Cass and what the development of a community school will bring to it. What good already exists? How can a community school build upon this? Also how can a community school solve the issues facing the Northern Cass district? Much investigation is applied to the sequence of developmental events that will take place to ensure the success of the community and continued growth of the school. This includes further development within the programmatic infrastructure of the school that would attract prospective students and their families.

### Advantages of Northern Cass School:

Small school size is one of the advantages presented by rural education. More than 40 years of research indicates that, compared to students who attend larger schools, students who attend small schools achieve at equal to higher rates, graduate at higher rates, and exhibit fewer behavioural problems (Williams, 2006).

Northern Cass is largely a small rural school, but is not small enough where available funds and student enrollment numbers become an issue. Yet, it is nowhere close to be considered a large school, which can also have financial issues. A school the size of Northern Cass is more financially stable than smaller schools and larger Class A schools. This financial stability allows the school to maintain visual arts programs and extracurricular activities that would otherwise fall to budget cuts in less stable schools (Burgad, 2011).

### **When comparing small schools (less than 300) and big schools (more than 1,000), big schools have:**

- 825 percent more violent crimes
- 270 percent more vandalism
- 378 percent more theft and larceny
- 394 percent more physical fights or attacks
- 32000 percent more robberies
- 1000 percent more weapons incidents

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

In addition, 52 percent of small school principals report either no discipline or minor discipline problems; only 14 percent of big school principals can report the same. Student tardiness and absenteeism are serious or moderate problems at significantly fewer small schools, and teacher absenteeism and violence toward teachers were five times more likely in big schools. Finally, student alcohol, drug, and tobacco use are all significantly more likely in big schools (Bailey, 2011).

There are many reasons for these differences among the size differences in communities and schools. The social fabric of small communities with small schools contributes to less violent, more social atmosphere. Students are less likely to damage the property of an institution to which they are connected, and the school is one of the institutions that binds together smaller communities. Also, in small schools and communities the concerns for parents' feelings are strongly present in communities where, for good or bad, everyone knows your name.

Student tardiness and absenteeism are serious or moderate problems at significantly fewer small schools, and teacher absenteeism and violence toward teachers were five times more likely in big schools. Finally, student alcohol, drug, and tobacco use are all significantly more likely in big schools (Bailey, 2011).

It is a goal of the school to have a 96% average daily attendance. This goal has been successfully met from the 2006/07 to the 2008/09 school year (Northern Cass School, 2011).

Measuring **ACHIEVEMENT** is difficult and subjective. Bright, motivated, and well taught students will likely succeed in any school. But are there advantages to smallness that lead to academic achievement? Policy makers assume that large schools are superior due to technology, resources, and curriculums that provide a deeper and broader education.

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

Northern Cass has been able to make big strides in technological advancement and currently supplies laptops to all high school students. Students use their laptop to take notes while teachers at the front of the classroom with a “Smart Board,” an interactive, touch-screen that takes the place of a chalkboard. By entering information on the Smart Board’s six-foot-wide display, teachers can show the process of solving equations or give extensive notes on a subject. Students then can upload these examples and notes onto their laptops and review them later while doing their homework (Burgad, 2011).

While some states require laptops for students, Northern Cass is among just a few schools in North Dakota doing it, according to Superintendent Allen Burgad. “It’s all part of the school’s mission to be “on the cutting edge of learning,” he says.

Students solve calculus problems on their computer screens, read literary classics online, and hand in assignments through the school’s electronic network. This is also an environmentally friendly option to doing homework. Since the introduction of personal laptops into the classroom, students rarely use paper. Lessons and worksheets or assignments are saved and handed in on the school network, so even students who are absent can access and complete the day’s work from home (Burgad, 2011).

In English class students read books on their laptops and take accelerated-reading tests, also practicing ACT tests and researching essay papers. This is very effective in teaching students how to use credible web sites for research. Independent living class requires the students to use their laptop to research costs for a budget, such as car prices and insurance. The class’ curriculum is entirely online (Burgad, 2011)

Even the art classes are finding use in their laptops creating clay animation movies and researching influential artists and their work. Currently at least six classes use online text books. Students also claim that the laptops help them to stay organized, finish assignments quicker and find the most recent information (Burgad, 2011).



# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

A program called Vision Client allows teachers to see each student's screen on their own computer. If they see something they don't like, they can freeze it and take over the unit. Each laptop is set up to filter sites students are able to see for their safety and control use of the machine outside school hours. Wireless Internet is accessible throughout the school, but students are not allowed to instant message during class, play games, or access other inappropriate materials. They must be logged onto the school network (Burgad, 2011).

This program was made possible by the support of Microsoft employees who reside in the Northern Cass District (Burgad, 2011).

Extracurricular activities are able to be financially supported while still maintaining numbers that allow opportunities for all students who want to participate. An example of this is that at Northern Cass, few if any cuts are made to participation numbers of sports teams. This often leads to higher participation numbers (Burgad, 2011).

Participation in school activities made people feel counted and like they belonged, and that has carried over into an adult feeling of connectedness to their school and community. Twenty-three research studies found that extracurricular participation rates are higher and more varied in small schools than in large schools, and that alienation from the school environment is lower in small schools.

National studies have also concluded: In nearly every measure, rural students equal or exceed the participation rates of all students. These data also confirm an important aspect of participation in small schools diversity. Mathematically, if nearly all students in a small school participate, these figures suggest that students have to be involved in multiple activities. This is not the case in large schools, where studies find that the activity offerings may be greater but where the average large school student does not use that variety.

Why is participation in school activities important? Research shows participation in extracurricular activities is a significant indicator of academic success; those

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

involved in activities tend to be better students. Also important, is the sense of belonging and connection to the school environment students get from participation.

Alienation from school activities and environment usually concludes in a bad outcome itself, and is connected with other undesirable outcomes such as lack of confidence and self-esteem, lack of responsibility for self-direction, absenteeism and increased dropout rates. Participation is highly correlated with positive attitudes and enhanced social behavior. Students who participate feel a part of a school community, have better attitude toward the school environment, and if they remain in the larger community, are likely to carry that attitude toward the school into their adult lives (Bailey, 2011).

## Current activities include:

**Acalympics-** a team of students compete at events that promote academic competition among schools

**Close Up-** A week long learning adventure in Washington, D.C., for high school students and educators. Students raise money to attend this event by selling pizzas.

**Enrichments Programs-** These include programs such as Knowledge Master, National History Day, Poetry Out Loud, Destination Imagination, and a Spelling Bee. Programs such as these are used to expose students to more learning opportunities through speakers and visitors as well as competitions and contests. In 2010, 73 students participated in enrichment programs.

**German Club-** A group of students travel to foreign lands through their studies and create visuals and give presentations on their findings. Participation in this group counts towards elective credits.

**JETS-** the Junior Engineering Technical Society is a program in which students compete against other schools in a state-wide competition. Students are given questions to answer relating to math or science. Northern Cass has had many successful teams competing in these events.

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

**Music-** Group and individual lessons for voice and instrument are offered to students during and outside of school hours.

**NHS-** National Honor Society is a program that recognizes students who show good character by participating in volunteer work and a wide variety of school activities. Students accepted into this program receive an award and attend a yearly conference promoting ways to be involved in your school and community.

**SADD-** Students Against Destructive Decisions is a program that supports and constructs events to promote healthy students, families, and communities.

**Student Council-** Students from each class are elected to represent the opinions, needs, and wants of the student body. Student officials attend a yearly conference in which they compete against other schools.

Current sporting activities include:

- Football
- Volleyball
- Basketball
- Track & Field
- Baseball
- Cross Country
- Cheerleading
- Weightlifting

(Northern Cass School, 2011)

Ollie Cooperwood, Wrestling Coach West Carteret High School wrote: “The importance of sports in the life of a young student is invaluable and goes much further than the basic answer that “it keeps kids off the streets.” It does in fact keep kids off the streets, but it also instills lessons that are essential in the life of a student athlete. Sports play a pivotal role in the makeup of a young athlete, especially in the middle school to high school years where student athletes are much more mature and mentally developed. Where else can a young, impressionable youth learn values like discipline, responsibility, self confidence, sacrifice, and accountability?”

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

In order for this to happen, school sports programs must have a few components in place. The first thing they need is a good core of coaches that understand the great responsibility that is placed upon their shoulders to help shape and prepare these student athletes not only in sports, but in their everyday lives (Cooperwood, 2011).

The second component also involves the coaches: It is the ability to capture the admiration and the trust of the athletes. This is crucial because if you can capture a person's admiration and trust you can motivate them to perform at a higher level not only in sports, but also in their own lives. If you can get the athletes to believe in you and your philosophies you can begin to see significant changes in grades and behavior (Cooperwood, 2011).

The third and the most crucial of all is the support that comes from the community, and administration. This is very important because student athletes need to know they are appreciated and there is no greater way than for the community, booster club, and commissioners/ treasurers to show that appreciation than to get involved in youth athletics. In order to accomplish this it's going to take investment and the most valuable investments are money and time (Cooperwood, 2011).

Participating in sports helps students to understand the meaning of the term team work. Team work is one of the most important skill that high school student can learn through sports. Through team work, students can learn how each individual effort combined with that of their team-mates create the success level of the team. Although, winning everything isn't always the best lesson to learn, the fact everyone does their best the team does better is the most important thing to learn (Nayal, 2010).

Participation in different kind of sports helps students to be active, healthy and strong. It also benefits mental health as well as maintain their energy balance. Students engage in physical activity have stronger immune system which prevents them from minor or major illness. It also helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints. Also helps in controlling weight, build lean muscle and reduce fat (Nayal, 2010).

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

Apart from health benefits, sports also helps students in academics. Students must keep their grades at a satisfactory level to be eligible to participate in sporting events. Also the participation in sports can lead to the possibility of gaining college sponsorship. This is extremely important for lower income group who cannot afford their child's education.

Having a variety of activities and subjects apart of school function and curriculum needs an entire support group to be maintained. This includes the participation of students, teachers, administration, parents, and the community as a whole.

Small schools are manageable, where administrators know the students and their families, and disciplinary problems are detected and resolved earlier and communication is easier among familiar faces (Bailey, 2011).

An article written by a current rural North Dakota teacher states the same thing. This teacher summarizes what there is to love about educating in a rural environment:

- They're small and you get to know the students and their families.
- You see students outside the school context.
- You get to teach a wide selection of courses.
- The culture is that education is opportunity.
- There is lots of room out here to breathe!
- Classroom management is easier.
- Students and their parents (mostly) recognize the value of hard work.
- I'm quite conservative, so I'm comfortable in this conservative culture.
- I have quite a lot of freedom to teach as I see fit.
- My students are ready and willing to be pushed to their potential.

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

## Dis-advantages of Northern Cass School:

Though some teachers love teaching in a rural environment, others are strayed away because of the lack of amenities and resources.

Schools across the country struggle to attract and retain effective teachers. Many rural schools face the unique challenge of trying to attract teachers to high-needs, low-amenity areas while being unable to pay salaries competitive with suburban and urban schools. Rural schools are often forced to take drastic measures to overcome teacher shortages including consolidating classes, employing out-of-field teachers, and decreasing course offerings. (Williams, 2006)

Fifty percent of the teaching staff at Northern Cass lives outside the district, most residing in the Fargo-Moorhead area. A reason for this is a no available housing in the communities, which is directly affected by the lack of amenities. The only town that has been successful further developing is Argusville due to its close proximity to Interstate 29 and Fargo. This makes recruitment of new teachers very hard. (Burgad, 2011).

Teachers recruited by and teaching in rural schools must be prepared for the conditions of rural teaching. They not only must have the credentials they need, but they should also be aware of the nature of small schools in small communities (U.S. Department of, 2008).

The decision to teach in a rural district can require teachers to maintain multiple certifications (No Child Left Behind) while living far from the nearest university and preparing for and teaching several different classes each day, all at a salary that may be thousands of dollars less than one's suburban or urban counterparts (U.S. Department of, 2008).

Rural schools in the central United States face critical teacher shortages in three content areas: math and science, English as a second language, and special education (U.S. Department of, 2008). According to Superintendent Allen Burgad, recruiting and maintaining math and science teachers has been an issue for the school.

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

Rural and urban schools face issues with not only student involvement but with parent and community involvement. This goes back to the need of a strong whole support group (Bailey, 2011). Lack of parent and community involvement is said to be an issue within the Northern Cass School District (Burgad, 2011).

When schools and families work together to support learning, everyone benefits.

- Students do better in school and in life.
- Parents become empowered.
- Teacher morale improves.
- Schools get better.
- Communities grow stronger

According to this review of recent research published by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (2002), students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs
- Be promoted, pass their classes and earn credits
- Attend school regularly
- Have better social skills, show improved behavior and adapt well to school
- Graduate and go on to post-secondary education

When parents talk to their children about school, expect them to do well, help them plan for college, and make sure that out-of-school activities are constructive, their children do better in school. When schools engage families in ways that are linked to improving learning, and support parent involvement at home and school, students make greater gains. When schools build partnerships with families that respond to their concerns, honor their contributions, and share power, they are able to sustain connections that are aimed at improving student achievement. And when families and communities organize to hold poorly performing schools accountable, school districts make positive changes in policy, practice, and resources (“Research review and,”).

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

Parents and children are not the only ones who benefit from good schools. Everyone in a community gains from good schools. A good school increases property values and improves the quality of life for all members of the community.

The local school is an integral part of the fabric of its community. Each is a mirror unto the other; the success of one entity is naturally reflected in the other. The community is filled with volunteer organizations that can provide a vast array of services and benefits to the local school. When a community takes an interest in the school, it shows. It shows from the grounds of the campus to the faces of the students. When a community is valued by its citizens, the school is valued by its community.

A school can also be an invaluable resource to a community. Students can volunteer to aid community organizations with their projects and learn invaluable lessons in the process. Not only can these experiences help students choose a career path, they cement the value of volunteering in their minds. This spirit of volunteerism will benefit the community for many years to come (Johnson, 2004).

The issue of low community involvement diminishes the opportunity of local business involvement. Good schools are essential for businesses to thrive. Collaborative efforts between the local school and local businesses are mutually beneficial and will help each group to attain both individual and collective goals.

Successful businesses know that good schools are an investment worth making. Through programs such as internships, mentoring and shadowing, businesses help students to discover their talents, abilities and skills and learn how to apply lessons learned in the classroom in a business setting. (Johnson, 2004).

By sharing the knowledge, expertise and wisdom gained from years in their respective fields, local professionals help reinforce the information and material that is taught by the instructor.

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

Schools can play the role of center of community in which all these resources can come together and create a mutually beneficial relationship that promote better education, stronger families, and healthier communities.

## The development of a Community School:

Rural schools are expected to provide a quality education for all students while overcoming challenges such as transportation barriers, strained resources, and lack of access to needed services. Yet these schools are most often at the mercy of others who are external to the school system to provide them with the means to accomplish that goal. School districts depend primarily upon funding made available by local, state, and federal policymakers. The ability to attract and retain effective teachers, provide and maintain suitable facilities, and have children enter school ready to learn are all issues that extend beyond the school itself. These issues take on particular significance in rural areas, and all sectors of the community and all levels of government must see them as a shared responsibility (Williams, 2006).

Full-service community schools may well provide the greatest opportunity for quality education and success in rural communities where resources are few. Community schools offer a much-needed alternative to traditional schooling models even in rural communities that are not economically stressed (Williams, 2006).

Rural students face many of the same difficulties as urban students in receiving much-needed health and social services. The low number of health care providers in rural areas limits access to physical, mental health, and dental. Distance and limited transportation options may make it difficult for families to tap into services that might be provided by informal associations and organizations, as well as the more formal social service providers such as county welfare offices, public health services, and food distribution centers. (Williams, 2006)

Full-service community schools provide a range of family support services in addition to services for children. Parent and family resources centers

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

provide family health services, social services, and adult education programs. Adult education offerings might range from basic literacy classes, sometimes accompanied by workforce skills training, to college degree or certification courses. Such offerings have obvious family economic benefits in that they increase parental and caregiver employability and wage-earning capacity (Williams, 2006).

Community schools have the added benefit of extending learning opportunities for children on all academic levels, first by relieving teachers of many of the nonteaching tasks they perform during school time and then by providing high-quality, out-of-school time learning opportunities. Teachers often fill the void left when students do not receive necessary supports and services. Community schools reduce the strain on teachers' time by bringing together and integrating youth development, health, and social services provided by other individuals, organizations, and agencies (Williams, 2006).

Local governments should consider co-locating schools and services for children before deciding to build new structures or otherwise providing separate housing for schools and service agencies. This can be especially beneficial as rural communities try to attract young health care providers who might wish to set up a private practice but are unable to afford the related costs (Williams, 2006).

Negotiate agreements and reduce risks among partners: The duration of commitment and exit strategies for joint facility users may vary among partners. No one wants to be left carrying the financial weight of the joint-use facility if one or more of the partners are less stable or subject to involuntary relocation or consolidation to other sites. This challenge becomes most important when districts are considering new school construction that incorporates unique spaces for child and family services (Williams, 2006).

Local and state governmental entities can minimize the financial risk to community school partners by devising a formula for allocation space costs or construction costs to multiple service providers and their separate funding

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

and administrative barriers to joint-use facilities and recommend policy changes specific to their respective states. They should capitalize and administer a joint-use guarantee fund that insures against the loss of fiscal capacity to meet bond payments if a partner is forced to abandon the joint-use facilities before the partners fulfill the terms of the financing due to state or local government action. These new joint-use facility financing plans should replace existing state or federal facility financing plans (Williams, 2006).

Many rural students spend two hours or more a day getting to and from school. The time required to go to and from school can reduce opportunities for students to engage in extracurricular and after-school enrichment activities. Students may also travel from areas where access to community institutions such as libraries, parks, recreation centers, and theaters is limited or nonexistent. locate those services that support learning and family involvement rather than adding additional strain to local economies to build and maintain multiple facilities that stand idle a majority of the time. Schools, family  
Another important benefit of full-service community schools in rural areas is facility access and use. School facilities, like local governmental agencies, are financed largely by local tax dollars. It seems to make good economic sense where resources are scarce to co- resource centers, youth development programs, and dental and primary care health services need not operate in silos that shut down during the hours that many families could most readily access them (Williams, 2006).

Community schools might be the most economically feasible option in low-resource, rural areas. Preparing children to learn, extending learning opportunities beyond the school day, and strengthening families are but few areas where this might be the case (Williams, 2006).

Just as important as academic skills are the skills and knowledge gained more readily in school-affiliated, but community-led, extended-learning programs such as problem-solving, analyzing information, generating new ideas, teamwork, and exposure to diverse groups of students. These programs “can give breadth to student learning and help students develop the skills that

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

business leaders cite as necessary for success in a global economy”. Community schools, unlike traditional schools that operate on a limited schedule, tend to stay open longer during the week, on weekends, and in the summer, making them ideal settings for extended learning opportunities for rural children.

It was concluded that schools alone may not be able to achieve high levels of parent engagement, but that they can profit from the “social capital expertise” of community-based organizations. Community-based organizations can act as intermediaries and build bridges between educators and parents and act as catalyst for change (Williams, 2006).

How can this be integrated?

Engagement in community schools occurs when parents, students, school staff, and neighbors invest in the school, co-creating and owning it. There is a conscious effort to ensure that services are not merely co-located but integrated in a way that increase the social capital that goes into overcoming or removing the barriers to student, family, and community success and citizenship.

The word “community” in full-service community schools implies more than those services or activities that normally happen outside of the school setting. It implies a uniqueness about place and the people who live there. Each place has a unique history, culture, economy, and ecology. Each has a unique set of relationships, power structures, challenges, and opportunities. We must therefore plan each community school taking into account its individual surroundings and circumstances (Williams, 2006).

In order to meet a desired goal all those involved must have a shared vision. This being the first step in decision making and any design process can be the hardest to overcome. A report released from Public Agenda examines the attitudes and assumptions that different groups have about the concept of public engagement in schools. It reveals a general acceptance of the concept of public engagement with schools but varied interpretations of what that actually means and who should be responsible for it.

- The general public values public education and is open to increasing community involvement

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

with schools, at least in theory. But as long as ordinary citizens think the schools are performing well, they are comfortable leaving education policy to education leaders. These findings suggest that if schools are interested in engaging the public, they will likely need to take the initiative.

- **Teachers** generally feel that the most important thing community residents can do for their schools is to give educators their strong support. The best way to accomplish this, in their view, is to invite them in to see the schools “up close.”

- **Superintendents** are -- of all the groups included in this report -- the most familiar with the concept of public engagement, and most say that public engagement efforts are in place in their districts. Their definition of public engagement typically includes give-and-take dialogue with community residents and listening to what people want the schools to look like. But most superintendents interviewed view communication with community residents as a less pressing issue than raising student achievement or securing school funding.

- **Schoolboardmembers** generally described school board meetings as unproductive and dominated by a small number of people with narrow interests. However, they also relied on this forum more heavily than any other to understand the views of community residents. This underscores the importance of finding new ways to engage citizens who have a broad rather than particular agenda (Euthitopia Staff, 2011).

Parental and community engagement is important to school success but is often difficult to achieve. In case of three notable urban community schools (Logan Square Neighborhood in Chicago, the Camino Nuevo Charter Academy in Los Angeles, and the culture Quitman Street Community School in Newark) found three common elements relative to successful parent engagement. The first was an emphasis on relationship building among parents and between parents and educators. Second was a focus on leadership development among parents. Third, and perhaps the most important, was an effort to bridge the gap in and power between parents and educators (Williams, 2006)..

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

Community schools can help to improve teaching quality by bringing community based expertise and indigenous knowledge into the teaching and learning experience. Permitting districts to implement community educator certification programs will allow for the placement of highly skilled and knowledgeable community members in classrooms under the supervision of highly qualified-highly effective teachers of record. This type of program can facilitate the movement of parent community volunteers into the teaching profession in understaffed areas.

Schools can partner with community colleges to provide educational services that bring adults into the school building such as adult literacy, college courses, and career and technical certification programs. School districts can partner with recreation departments, arts councils, historic societies, and other community resources to make facilities available to students and community members beyond normal school hours.

Recommendations set forth in this brief to create desirable communities and educational establishments influence the programmatic goals of this thesis. Policies and practices that are adopted from the 10 PLUS Mechanics of Change into the new community are the following:

**Community Schools and Full Service Schools** offer a model of school and community improvement through increasing resources and services to address the needs of the “whole child” to better prepare them to succeed in school. Common strategies include providing medical, social, and other services inside schools, creating what has come to be known as “full-service” or “community” schools. The Coalition for Community Schools, a national research and advocacy organization, notes “integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement leads to improved student learning, stronger families, and healthier communities.” John Sugiyama, Superintendent of Emery Unified School District and PLUS participant explains what this model has meant to his team:

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

*The Emeryville Center of Community Life really takes 'community schools' to the next level. It's not about building or renovating schools and creating spaces for a variety of other services to come in to support the education of children. It's really about creating a true community center that is designed to provide a rainbow of services to all residents in the community. In this sense it's not about a physical facility, it's really about how you transform a community to really meet the needs of the entire community and really impact the quality of life. (McKoy, Bierbaum, & Vincent, 2009)*

**P-16** (“preschool through college”) educational strategies aim to close the achievement gap. Governors in seventeen states have established P-16 Councils to foster “unprecedented collaboration between all segments of the business community, higher education, and the K-12 system” in an effort to align the K-12 system with higher education systems and the current needs of the workforce to promote better articulation amongst all stakeholders. The P-16 movement is an important reminder that families will choose to stay in neighborhoods that provide lifelong trajectories of educational opportunity for their children and that other families will choose to move into neighborhoods that promise as much. (McKoy, Bierbaum, & Vincent, 2009)

**Career and Technical Education (CTE)** – combining preparation for both college and careers – builds on more than two decades of research and policies. High schools no longer track some students directly into entry-level work; instead, preparing all students for postsecondary education is a nearly universal goal. CTE is a strategy that prepares students for college while at the same time supports the development of work-related skills and connects the students to learning opportunities in communities and workplaces outside of school through internships, apprenticeships, career academies, and other innovative strategies. (McKoy, Bierbaum, & Vincent, 2009)

**Smart Growth & Regional Equity** movements offer insight to school and neighborhood improvement from a broader scale. Smart growth advocates focus on creating a mix of housing types, multi-modal transportation, and retail in all communities to encourage walking and bicycling and preserve open space. Increasingly, the movement has also focused on how designing neighborhood-oriented schools can foster healthier neighborhoods and more robust school-community connections. PolicyLink, a national think tank and leader of the movement, notes that at its core, “regional equity seeks to ensure that individuals and

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

families in all communities can participate in and benefit from economic growth and activity. Including access to high-performance schools, decent affordable housing located in attractive neighborhoods, living wage jobs, and proximity to transit and important amenities, such as a grocery store and park. (McKoy, Bierbaum, & Vincent, 2009)

**School-Oriented Community Development** is a strategy that prioritizes the rehabilitation and/or new construction of schools as a centerpiece to new housing development, making it more appealing to a mix of residents. Several leading affordable housing developers such as McCormick, Baron, and Salazar in conjunction with their nationally recognized nonprofit arm, Urban Strategies, have focused specifically on the redevelopment of elementary schools as a means to create vibrant mixed-income housing communities in a number of cities. The nonprofit organization Enterprise Community Partners (ECP) has documented many of these successes providing “existing proofs” that housing redevelopment and education can have a positive, mutually beneficial relationship. This movement highlights the importance of inviting the private sector to participate in integrated initiatives. (McKoy, Bierbaum, & Vincent, 2009)

**Schools as Centers of Community.** Developed largely by nationally recognized urban planners and designers, this approach to planning strategically locates schools in neighborhoods so that they are easy to get to and act as central public spaces for events and community building. A school’s convenient location for families and communities enables more walking and bicycling to school and likely also means that more people can come to the school to access services, programs, and/or activities housed there. In effect, the school as center of community concept combines the ideas of smart growth advocates about efficient land use. The schools as centers of community movement is an important example of how planning and community development practice is increasingly aware of the complex and reciprocal relations between the built environment and learning opportunities. (McKoy, Bierbaum, & Vincent, 2009)

In theoretical models of residential sorting, a household’s location decision is closely tied to its demand for consuming local public services. Consistent with this theory, districts with popular schooling options experience relatively large increases in housing values and in the number of households with children. The results of a study on The Effects of Interdistrict Choice stated that an increase in quality of education and adoption of successful school programs increased population density. (Brunner, Cho, & Reback, 2010)

# Theoretical Premise & Unifying Idea

The Alliance for Excellent Education lists 10 key elements that every rural high school needs to have in place to ensure its students' success. These elements and principles are all evident to varying degrees in each of the community school models presented above.

Alliance for Education key elements:

1. College and work-ready curriculum for all children
  2. Personal attention for all students
  3. Extra help for those who need it
  4. Bringing the real world to the classroom
  5. Family and community involvement
  6. A safe learning environment
  7. Skilled teachers
  8. Strong leaders
  9. Necessary resources
  10. User-friendly information for parents and the community
- (Williams, 2006)

## In Summary:

The growth capacity and economic factors set forth the opportunities for physical and programmatic development of a school-oriented community. Results of developments of community schools around the nation have been found to be beneficial to both participants. This type of development is an overall fit to the many needs of a community. A higher quality education is offered to the youth and at the same time better services are available to the community and within close proximity to the users. The integration of the school into the community fabric and vice versa ensures the well being of both since one will need the other to survive.

A community school addresses the needs of the “whole child” as well as the “whole community”. The success of a community school can increase student participation and achievement, parent and community involvement, and teaching quality. This center of community can offer a place in which its members take pride, wanting to further contribute to its success as well as the success of the individual community members.

# The Program

## Typological Research: Case Studies

Noble High Community School  
The Emeryville Center of Community  
Perham, Minnesota Public Schools

# The Program

## Case Study: Noble High Community School



### Project Type:

Development of a rural school into a mixed use, center of community that places integrated focus on academic, social, and health needs of its community.

### Location:

The rural area of North Burwick, Maine, serving the three rural communities; Berwick, North Berwick, and Lebanon. With a combined population of 12,320, it is one of the fastest growing areas in Maine.



Photos of newly constructed school courtesy of: Noble High website

### Distinguishing Characteristics:

Successful combination of:

- Education
- Health
- Community
- Technology
- Architecture
- Strong sense of self

### Existing Program Elements:

- Strong connection to the 3 rural communities it serves
- Small town values
- Core educational purpose

## Issues that lead to the creation of a community school:

- Rapid growth....The original school was designed for 550, in 1995 enrollment grew to 900 and was growing by 50 to 100 students a year
- Disconnection...The three towns that the school serves is spread over 134 miles
- Isolation....Lack of services for both children and adults
- Inadequate facility....The campus held 14 mobile units and could not accommodate the kinds of programs the school and community wanted for their children.
- Poverty....21 percent of the school's students are eligible for free and reduced meals

## Programs and Services:

### Comprehensive health services:

Services for students and community members include:

- Diagnosis and treatment of acute illness and injury
- Management of chronic ailments, including asthma and diabetes
- Routine hearing, visual, and dental screenings; prescription services
- Laboratory testing
- Sports examinations
- Mental health services

### Early childhood programs:

- Children come from eight surrounding towns and attend at no cost
- This provides internships and work-study opportunities for high school students
- Performing arts center:
  - Performing arts center holds a theatre, an auditorium, and a small lecture hall
  - A group of community members serves as the center's advisory board
  - Rental and admissions fees have made it financially self-sustaining.

### Culinary arts:

- Home of the Stanford Vocational Culinary Arts Program
- Students operate a 50 person restaurant during school hours
- Accessible from the town square
- Serves as a gathering place for students, teachers, and community members.

### Community service:

- Students must complete 60 hours of community service
- This reflects the school's commitment to its students "to heighten their sense of global responsibility, their sensitivity to social problems, and a sense of personal fulfillment through their commitment and caring for others".

### Adult education:

On-site and online classes and teleconferences for students and community members



Images courtesy of: Google

# Noble High Community School

## Three major goals to be accomplished by construction of the new school:

1. Build a sense of community among the three rural towns served by the school
2. Provide needed community services and lifelong learning opportunities for adults
3. Create a more personal, project based interdisciplinary learning environment for students

### Results:

The community school was developed in 2003 and as of 2005 it was already showing early signs in improvement of discipline, attendance, academics, and community engagement.

An example of this: Suspensions during the first two years of the community school's existence saw suspensions and class cuts reduced by more than fifty percent.

Academically, the percentage of Noble students meeting or exceeding proficiency on the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) in mathematics doubled from 8 percent to 16 percent between 2003 and 2004.

"All students are capable of success; and all students will have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to become self-directed, life long learners; flexible workers; complex thinkers and responsible community and global contributors" -Noble Mission Statement

## Case Study: EMERYVILLE CENTER OF COMMUNITY

The Emeryville Center of Community aspires to be a:

### Project Type:

A mixed-use, educationally centralized, redevelopment plan.

*21st-century urban place where we will play, learn, grow, and come together as a community. By offering a variety of educational, recreational, cultural, and social opportunities, as well as services and programs that support lifelong learning and healthy lifestyles, the Center will transform the quality of life of all Emeryville citizens. (McKoy, Bierbaum, & Vincent, 2009)*

### Location:

Emeryville, California

### Distinguishing Characteristics:

- Integration of the community and school district
- **Shared vision of a strong city school system between the community, influential business leaders, and local government**

Emeryville is a 1.2 square mile, urban city of 10,000 residents in the heart of the San Francisco Bay area. Emery United School District (EUSD) serves about 800 students at its two schools: Anna Yates Elementary and Emery Secondary School (McKoy, Bierbaum, & Vincent, 2009).

Working to get past a recent state takeover for fiscal mismanagement and low academic performance, EUSD is seeking to improve its educational system significantly by becoming a far more integral part of the city's programs and is improving academically in the process. The Emeryville Center of Community Life is a project that has and continues to be jointly visioned, planned, developed, funded, and managed by the City and the District (McKoy, Bierbaum, & Vincent, 2009).

### Existing Program Elements:

- Redevelopment of school policies
- Joint-use recreational lease with the city
- Development of a "Community School" \*

"Schools will become Centers of Community Life that invest in our community and create connections across the differences that would otherwise divide us" –Emeryville Center for Community Life (McKoy, Bierbaum, & Vincent, 2009).

Image from (McKoy, Bierbaum, & Vincent, 2009)



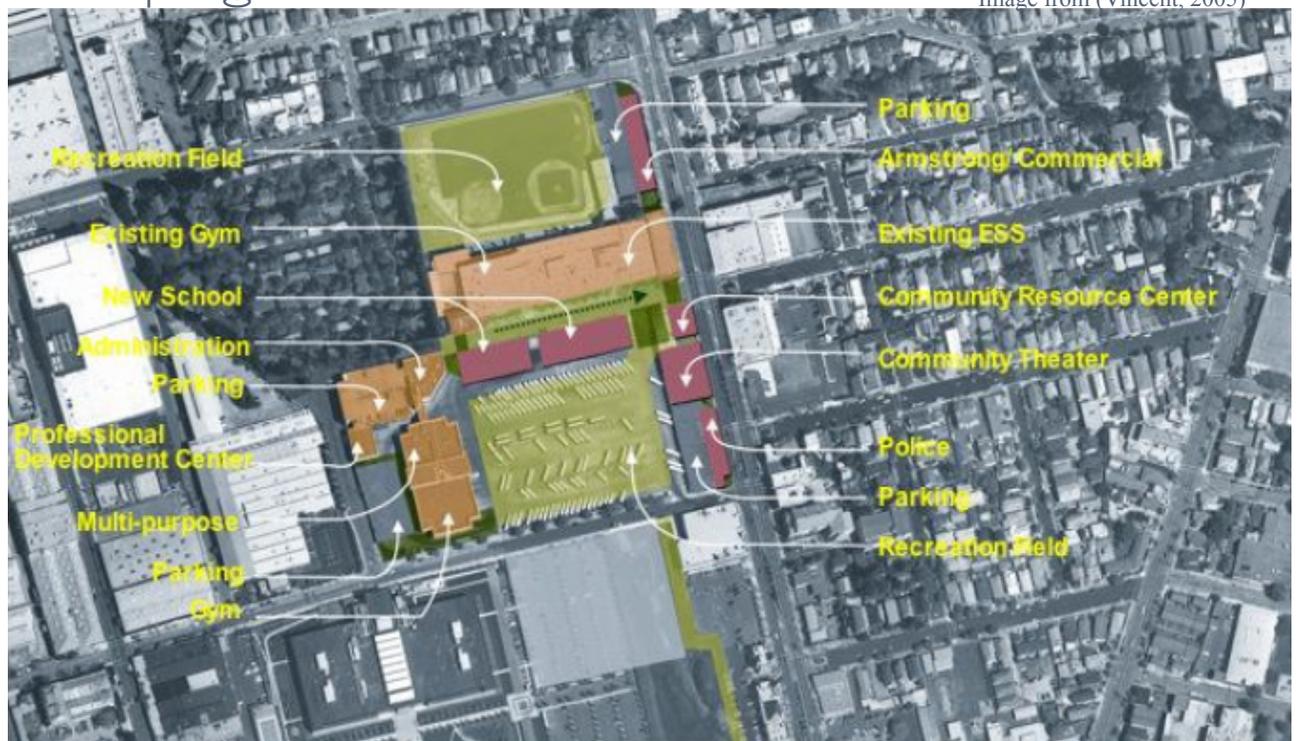
\*A school system that provides services such as medical, social, and other services inside schools, to the students and the community, creating what has come to be known as a "community school."

The EMERYVILLE CENTER OF COMMUNITY LIFE is on a nearly 20-acre site along the main thoroughfare of San Pablo Avenue. Currently, the site consists of the existing middle and high schools, a few private businesses, and a bus storage and repair facility for the region's bus service. Very nearby is also the Early Child Development Center and the district's one elementary school. Envisioned are new "green" school facilities, community health and service support centers, joint-use recreation facilities, as well as the desire to include private businesses and retail, possibly a fire or police station, as well as mixed-income housing to create a place that is diverse, vibrant, and a lived "center of community." Superintendent Tony Smith states, "We're really pushing the idea of a full-service community school, creating a center of community life, that fosters density and close relationships to make this city more livable and energizing for children and families" (Vincent, 2005).

The school district, city, businesses, and residents agree that to improve both the schools and the city, they must all work together to create a place that serves as the community's thriving center. School board member Josh Simon stated, "We don't want to just build the Center of Community Life. We want to be the center of the community life and then build a building around what we are. To do so involves an interaction between programs and design" (Vincent, 2005).

An Early Design:

Image from (Vincent, 2005)



## Case Study: Perham, Minnesota Public Schools

### Project Type:

An educationally-driven foundation to support opportunities for the youth and community members.

### Location:

Perham, Minnesota

### Distinguishing Characteristics:

Successful combination of:

- Strong communication efforts between the foundation and the community
- educational opportunities for all ages
- promotes ways to strengthen the community as a whole

### Existing Program Elements:

- a very informative and interactive school website
- an established advisory committee

### Perham Public School System

has created a foundation known as the 549 Family Foundation in which the following services are offered:

- **Enhance opportunities** for learning for students in all areas from the science room to the athletic field. Help provide rich programs in fine arts, athletics and extra-curricular activities

- **Supplement funds** from the state, to continue the mission of excellence for the students, school, and communities
- **Contribute to** capital projects to enhance the school facilities of District 549
- **Administer** alumni social events, fund raising efforts, and other endeavors
- **Work together** to strengthen the entire community....Strong schools, strong communities, strong future
- **Provide benefits** to all foundation participants by following the Service Statement...by serving as a source for information, a coordinator for personal service and volunteer efforts.

**THE MISSION** of this foundation is to encourage, solicit, receive and administer gifts, bequests of property, funds, and volunteer services for the advancement of quality in District 549 and the surrounding communities.

Contributors are asked to do so by volunteering talents or time, offering support through mentoring programs, or contributing financially. Every member of the community is invited to participate in any way that can strengthen the present for the youth, and provide them with the educational tools for a successful future. Programs offered through this foundation include the School Readiness programs (Kids Adventure opportunities) which are collaborative efforts between Head Start and Freshwater Education District. The foundation invites suggestions or requests for adult enrichment or children's classes to be offered within the community. Info courtesy of ("549 family foundation,")

**Noble High Community School** places a set instructional vision at the heart of its purposeful design. This vision, built around teacher teams and personal relationships with students, is consistent with and supports the key design features of smaller learning communities. Before the new building first opened, its physical layout had been carefully drafted by teachers and administrators engaged in organizational and instructional reforms since the early 1990s. Underpinning Noble's past and present improvement efforts are a sustained commitment to the high school redesign that serves all students, and focus on distributing academic success broadly and engaging the students, teachers, parents, and community members.

**Emeryville Center of Community** has the closest relationship of all case studies to the goals set forth in this thesis. This is the perfect example of integrating a school and a community to develop a mutually beneficial relationship. The programmatic aspects and physical design of this school offer many opportunities to the youth of the community while offering quality services to the other community members. Since the well being of one participant directly relies on the well being of the other, a continued success of both participants is ensured. This type of reassurance only further motivates the support of the community, influential business leaders, and local government. The example of the Emeryville Center of Community will be the most influential in the development of this thesis.

**The 549 Foundation** created by the Perham Public School system offers insight into successful ways a school can reach out to the community. The foundation recognizes the importance of communication with the community members about the contributions needed and the services offered to create a strong community. Much emphasis is placed on the importance of improving the present for the youth and offering them opportunities to ensure a successful future. There is a strong recognition that the present youth are the future of the community.

# The Program

## Historical Context:

### Reorganization Plan, 1995 - 1996:

During the 1995-96 school year the Cass Valley North School District (Grandin, Gardner, Argusville) and Dakota School District (Hunter, Arthur, Erie, Blanchard) school boards worked together to develop a reorganization plan. By combining the two districts at a central location, the reorganization plan laid the groundwork for plans that would change the way educational services would be delivered in Northern Cass County.

The reorganization plan was approved by both boards during the summer of 1996. Shortly after its approval, board members, teachers, students and patrons embarked on a journey that would entail many meetings, complex transportation schedules and juggling of staff and students. Through the completion of the three-phase plan outlined in the reorganization plan, students, teachers, administrators, board members and patrons were excited about the change this plan would bring about to the communities.

### The Time Is Right-UNITE, SUMMER/Fall 1996

The Public Relations committee began their work in the fall of 1996 and was one of the first groups working on behalf of the Cass Valley North and Dakota School districts. Their job was to lay the groundwork for the future reorganization and eventual new school building for these two school districts. Their first task was to develop a brochure and combine data for informational meetings held throughout the communities of their respective districts. The theme of this reorganization plan was: "The Time Is Right-Unite." This brochure included the following information:

A three-phase plan which stated that in Phase I (1997-1998), grades K-6 would remain in Grandin and Hunter, grades 7-9 would be in Argusville and grades 10-12 would be in Arthur, using the existing facilities. Phase II (1998-1999), after passage of the building bond issue, would keep grades K-6 in their respective buildings, but the Argusville site would be closed and all student in grades 7-12 would attend classes in Arthur.

Phase III (1999-2000) stated that everyone would be in a new K-12 building, centrally located on Cass County 26. Would be more efficient; realized in Professional staffing and course offerings would increase from 58-85 semester course offerings for high school students, greatly expanding opportunities for course variety and selection for students. Areas of expanded opportunities would be in art, technical and vocational education, foreign languages and family and consumer science. The brochure also contained a section about finance, which, after showing all of the bars/graphs/projections, stated quite confidently that “We can afford to construct and operate a new facility and prove an expanded educational program for less money than if we stay as independent school districts”(School Board members, 1996).

Information about transportation, projected enrollment and the status of existing facilities and the cost to renovate/upgrade was the precursor to information about a new K-12 facility and the benefits that such a facility would bring to the students and patrons of Northern Cass.

Public Information Meetings were held for the students and patrons of the Cass Valley North and Dakota school districts in October of 1996 in Argusville, Arthur, Grandin, and Hunter. The purpose of the meetings was to present the information made available in the brochure and to be available to answer any questions or concerns that patrons may have. One point that the school boards and the committee that developed the brochure made very clear during the public meetings was that, “if you do not intend to vote for a bond issue for the new school, then please do not vote for reorganization” (School Board members, 1996). The parties involved in this process felt very strongly about expanding curriculum and providing a first-class facility in which this could be accomplished. To simply vote for reorganization would not further the old districts’ long-range plan of becoming one school district and offering improved educational opportunities for their children as well as future generations of students attending Northern Cass.

## The Building Committee, Winter 1996-October 17, 1999

The November 5, 1996 vote for reorganization of the former Cass Valley North and Dakota school districts was passed by an overwhelming 78.8% of the voters. The proposed timeline for activities following the November 5 election further elaborated on the reorganization plan. A recap of this timeline shows the enormous amount of work that was to be completed before the bond vote scheduled for later in the fall of 1997. Following are some highlights of this timeline:

- **November 12, 1996:** Canvass election results of reorganization vote.
- **November 18, 1996:** Joint meeting of Cass Valley North and Dakota school boards with the Director of Finance and Reorganization from the State Department of Public Instruction.
- **November-June 1997:** Joint school board meetings as well as the formation of the following committees: building committee, curriculum committee, transportation committee and budget committee.
- **December 12, 1996:** Filing deadline for board representations for the new school board.
- **January 14, 1997:** Special election for new school board.
- **January 30, 1997:** Public hearing for plans detailing curriculum, class offerings and staffing for the new district.
- **January-June 1997:** Preparation of school construction documentation.
- **May-September 1997:** Public meetings for building project.
- **July 1, 1997:** Effective date of reorganized district.
- **July 1, 1997:** Retire Cass Valley North and Dakota school boards. New Northern Cass School Board assumes full power.
- **July 1997:** Receive reply from DPI regarding school construction application letter and letter regarding availability of state money for construction.
- **September 9, 1997:** Hold election for general obligation building bond.
- **September 10, 1997:** Submit application for state construction loan.

The building committee did a great deal of work before patrons voted for the bond issue and their work began in earnest after the successful passage of the reorganization vote. This work was necessary in order for the building committee and the new school board to present a visual picture of what they would be getting if people voted for the bond issue.

Throughout this process the architects and the building committee gleaned information from patrons, teachers, support staff and other school districts about what this new school should look like. With the continual drafting and design changes, the building committee was able to have a draft of the new Northern Cass K-12 school facility ready for a brochure being prepared for the bond vote in September of 1997. The building committee's work speaks for itself, because the building that stands today is virtually the same one presented to the public with only minor changes.

Once the bond issue passed (over 82% of vote casts, the highest margin a bond issue had ever been passed by in North Dakota), the building committee continued to take input, push, pull and tug at all edges of the design and fields of study to give each educational department its allotment of space in the new facility, yet keep the total cost of the project under budget.

## UNITED FOR THE FUTURE, Spring/Fall 1997

The brochure committee, working closely with members of the building committee, was charged with creating another brochure to deliver information regarding the needs, dynamics, cost and appearance of the new K-12 facility. The goal was to present accurate, relevant and useful data for patrons so they would have the necessary information in order to make an educated vote on the bond issue in September of 1997.

This particular brochure reviewed some of the information presented during the reorganization sessions, such as the three-phase plan and a more detailed account of the actual cost of this facility, but its main goal was to address the issue of the new facility and what it would be able to do for students and patrons of Northern Cass. Construction began in 1997 and the school was open for classes in the fall of the 1999-2000 school year.

## A narrative profile breaks this new facility into four areas: Academic/Library

One of the main features promoted at this time was that the academic areas of the facility would be built around a “house” concept. This concept allows for separation of grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12 to their own “houses.” In essence, these groupings would allow students to limited interaction with other age groups, yet keep them close to their own age group and own space that they can call their own, hence the “house” concept.

Each house would have its own Tech Resource area (a large room in each of the houses where teachers have the opportunity to do team teaching or teaching across the curriculum), the industrial tech/art/lab, business and life science lab would be readily accessible and developed to display students’ work in the viewing gallery, and the library would separate elementary and junior high/senior high libraries and would serve as the media center for the facility.

## Administrative/Special Services

The school counselor, special services and administrative services would be readily and easily accessible to the public. The teacher workroom would have two entrances, which allows for access at any time for teachers. Principal offices were designed to monitor traffic to and from the building.

## Athletic/Auditorium/Commons/Music

This included features such as a basketball court that would seat more than 500 people, an elementary gym that would also have a full size volleyball court, weight room for student and public use, a state-of-the-art auditorium to be used for musical and drama productions that would seat up to 400 (later downsized to 287), dressing rooms which would also function as community locker rooms, a commons area which would have many uses including: dance line practice, cheerleading practice, dances, lunch area and a general gathering area and individual practice rooms for bands as well as a media-lab.

## Public Use Functions/Site Plan FUNCTIONS

A feature the building committee considered during this process was how the public/patrons would be able to use this facility. Some of the highlights were that the library/media center, weight room, gyms, commons and the auditorium would be available for public use. Students would not have to cross any roads when dropped off by buses, and elementary students would not have to cross any roads when accessing the playground.

# The Program

## Goals

Clearly state the Theoretical Premise. This will be inspiration for investigation and experimentation of the development opportunities and limits. Research throughout all phases of this thesis will be affected by and directly affect the Theoretical Premise.

Research of case studies relative to this thesis will help to define the typology of the project. The different areas of emphasis set forth by the research and case studies will help to develop a hybrid solution for the development of this community school.

Research will clarify and justify the economical, social, environmental, and historical aspects of this thesis. This will develop a strong foundation on which to build this community school as well as act as a guideline that hold structure to the direction of this project.

Analysis of the site and the region it is located in will be conducted to develop better insight into the aspects needed for this design to have a positive impact. The result of the completion of this project will offer a clear understanding of a relationship between a school and community that will strengthen each other's existence and the quality of life for the citizens involved.

# The Program

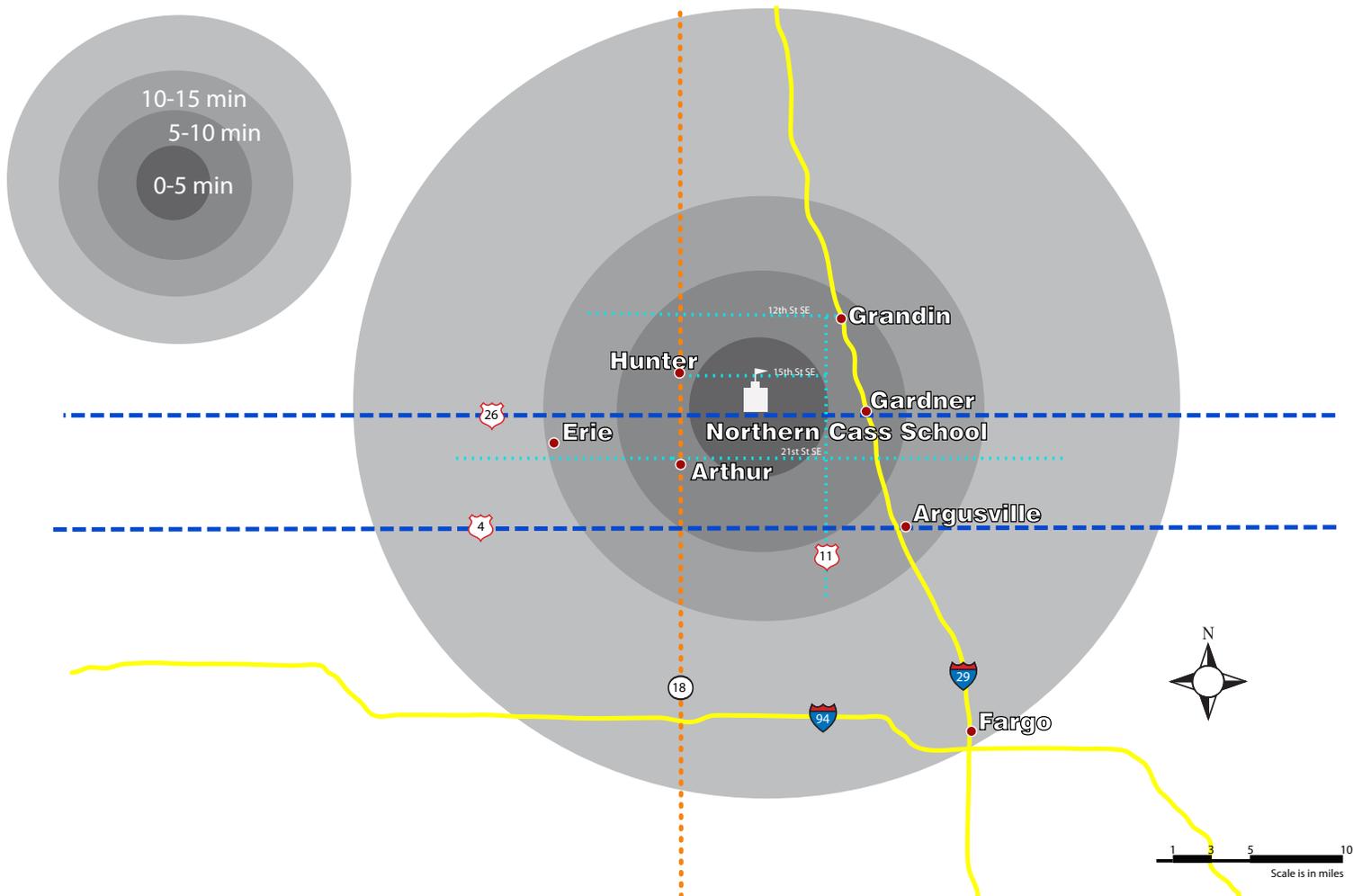
## Site Inventory/Analysis

Northern Cass School is located just under 7 miles west of Gardner, North Dakota. An advantage to the location of the site is its close proximity to the city of Fargo as well as interstate 29. Six small communities make up the school district: Hunter, Arthur, Argusville, Grandin, Gardner, and Erie. The average travel time from each community to the school is about 10 minutes.

**Transportation:** The map shows the major roads connecting the region. Interstate 29 and Interstate 94 are the two major roadways connecting the state of North Dakota. I-29 runs through the Northern Cass district connecting Grandin, Gardner, and Argusville. Labeled here are the state highways and county roads that connect the rest of the district.

A distinguishing natural element present in North Dakota is the wind, especially during the winter months. The harsh weather of includes fiercely cold winters, some of the windiest areas of the U.S., frequent thunderstorms and a rather active tornado season.

The element of wind will be taken into consideration when a community master plan is created for the opportunities to create micro climates within.



# Site Inventory/Analysis:

A distinguishing feature about this site is its vast openness and space available for possible development. Two residences directly neighbor the site to the west and the south. This will call for further investigation into how new development will account for these existing residences. Besides the farmsteads, the remaining surrounding areas are agricultural fields. County Road 26 runs east and west bordering the southern end of the site location, allowing easy transportation access to the site.

## Existing ELEMENTS ON SITE:

- Open space
- Viewsheds of surrounding landscape
- Shelterbelts
- Easy transportation access
- Naturalistic elements such as the meandering creek



Original maps courtesy of Google Earth.

# Site Inventory/Analysis:



Original maps courtesy of Google Earth.

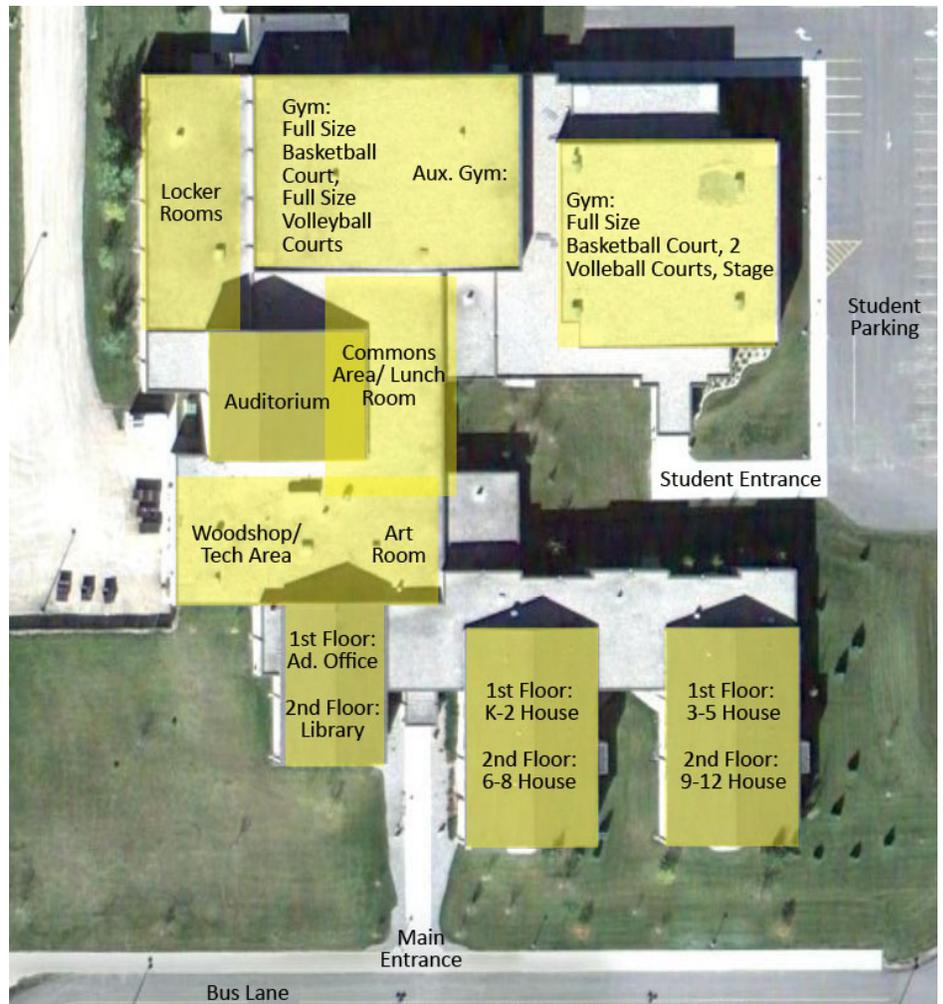
The school grounds are bordered by two shelterbelts to the east and west. The shelterbelt on the west side is composed of large mature trees that existed long before the school site was constructed. Running through this shelterbelt is a nature walk constructed by the school for educational purposes. Use of this currently is minimal and could be built upon and extended into the newly developed school campus. The shelterbelt on the east side was planted during the construction of the school (1997-1999), still allowing screened views of the surrounding fields and farmsteads. On the west side of the mature shelterbelt is a creek that runs north and south, eventually meeting the Red River. There are some low-lying wetland areas within close proximity to the school and a nature trail that could be used for educational purposes as well as scenic purposes within the school grounds.

Better connections need to be made between interior spaces of the facility and the exterior spaces. There is already the presence of sprawl within this site. Distances between the building and the exterior spaces are more than needed and do not offer any protection for the user from harsh winter winds.

North of the football field, screened by vegetation, are three holding ponds. If not already in place, a water treatment program could be incorporated and used as another educational opportunity for the youth and community. Existing location of these ponds will be further analyzed during the design phase of this thesis.

# Site Inventory/Analysis

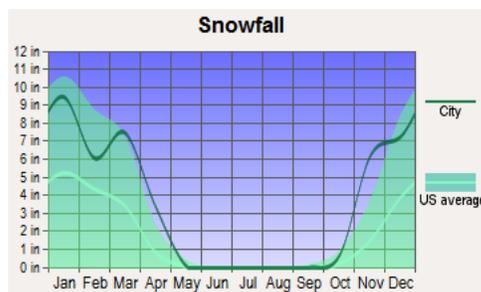
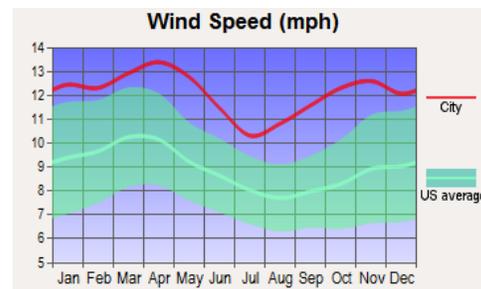
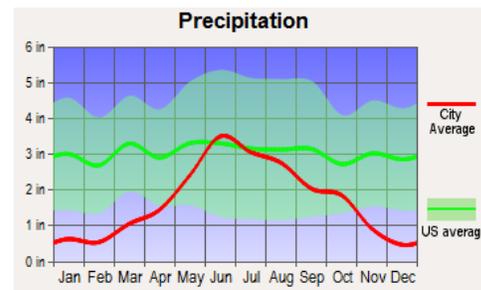
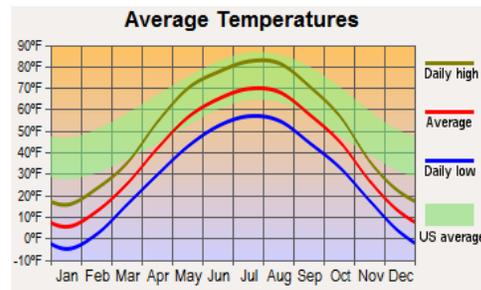
The layout of the school facility, as labeled below, will need to be further analyzed during the design stage of this thesis. Creation of a community school could create the need to add on to the facility or to renovate in areas that would be used to serve the community. Interior spaces will also be used to influence the layout of the surrounding exterior spaces. The exterior spaces can offer optimal views to and from the facility as well as create strong connections within the community school campus.



Original maps courtesy of Google Earth.

# Site Inventory/Analysis

The geography of North Dakota varies widely from the fertile Red River Valley in the east to the butte-spotted and rugged Badlands of the west. The Missouri River cuts through the state and is a major source of freshwater and irrigation for the surrounding areas. Though the land was aggressively marketed for new settlement in the early twentieth century, geographic isolation and economic stagnation meant the population of the state changed little over the years (“State master, 2010”).



(Citydata.com)

From the 2000 Census to 2005 population estimates, North Dakota lost roughly 18,000 people, and population trends show the decline could continue. The economy of North Dakota is largely agricultural, though much of the land is arid and not suitable for large-scale agricultural production. The exception is the Red River Valley, a fertile strip of land near the Minnesota border which was devastated by a flood in 1997. The region is also home to North Dakota’s largest city and cultural hub, Fargo, as well as the city of Grand Forks. The flooding of the Red River has impacted the communities located in the Northern Cass District (“State master, 2010”).

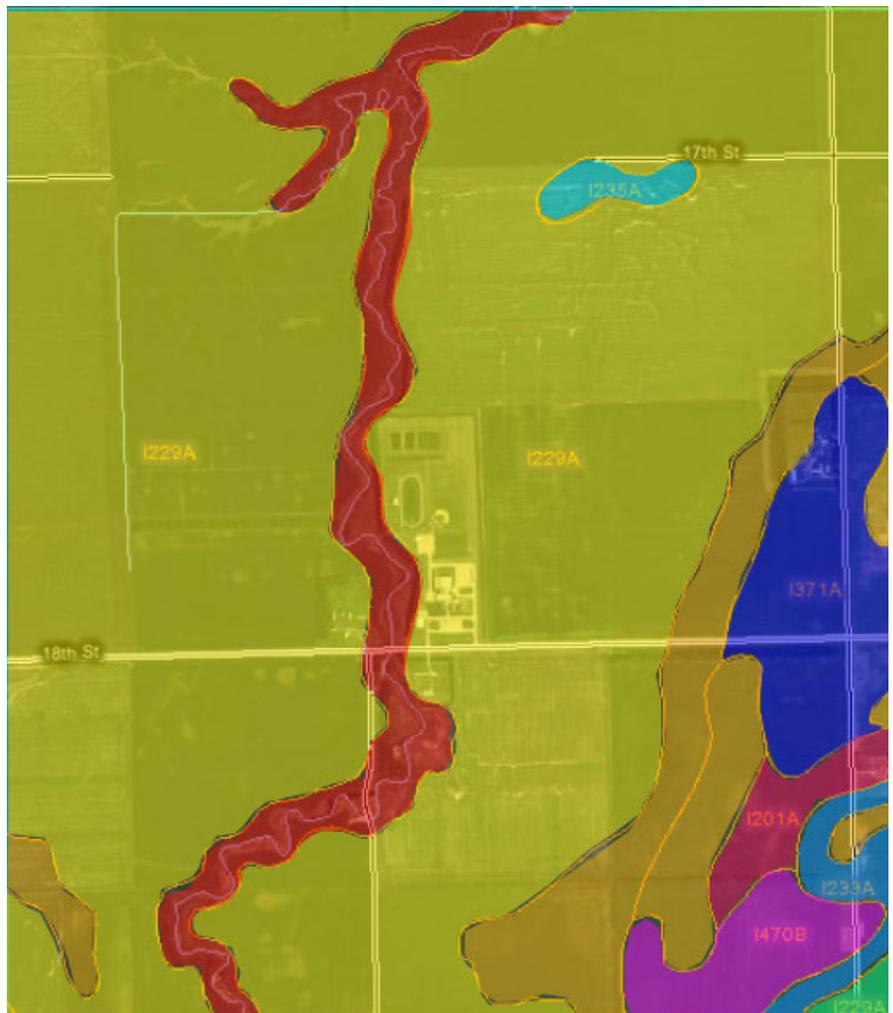
**Climate:** North Dakota lies in the northwestern continental interior of the U.S. Characteristically, summers are hot, winters are very cold, and rainfall is sparse to moderate, with periods of drought. The average annual temperature is 40°F (4°C), ranging from 7°F (-14°C) in January to 69°F (21°C) in July. The record low temperature, -60°F (-51°C), was recorded on February 15, 1936; the record high recorded, 121°F (49°C), on 6 July 1936.

The average yearly precipitation (1971–2000) is about 16.8 in (42.7 cm) and total annual snowfall averages 44 in (112 cm) (Citydata.com).

# Site Inventory/Analysis:

Soils on and surrounding the site for the most part are poorly drained, with no frequency of flooding but frequent ponding. The landform these soils are associated with are flats. Depth to the water table in this area is less than 18” in some spots and 42” and greater in others (“Web soil survey,”).

Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
I201A	Glyndon silt loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	35.8	1.4%
I229A	Fargo silty clay, 0 to 1 percent slopes	1,825.7	73.6%
I233A	Fargo silty clay loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	163.3	6.6%
I235A	Fargo silty clay, depressional, 0 to 1 percent slopes	42.0	1.7%
I371A	Bearden-Kindred silty clay loams, 0 to 2 percent slopes	120.6	4.9%
I383A	Overly silty clay loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	48.9	2.0%
I459C	Nutley-Fargo silty clays, 0 to 9 percent slopes	175.1	7.1%
I470B	Embden fine sandy loam, gravelly substratum, 1 to 6 percent slopes	59.0	2.4%
I490A	Glyndon-Tiffany silt loams, 0 to 2 percent slopes	9.4	0.4%
<b>Totals for Area of Interest</b>		<b>2,479.8</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



Original soils map and info courtesy of (“Web soil survey,”)

# Site Analysis:

The topography map shows the land forms associated are flats, with the exception of the creek running north and south along the west side of the site.

Information of the topography in conjunction with the soils present will directly affect the building site development, construction materials used, means of recreational development, vegetative production, and water management practices (“Web soil survey,”).



Original maps courtesy of Google Earth and (“Web soil survey,”)

# The Program

## Programmatic Requirements

### Campus Plan:

centralized layout around school facility so all areas are in close proximity to the central location  
Connections are to be made between youth educational areas and community areas.

### NEW CONSTRUCTION:

Construction will be completed to meet plans and standards set by the mutual parties involved. A new community facility and landscaping will be constructed to meet the needs of the youth and the community it serves.

### Transportation:

side walks and roadways will be designed for the pedestrian as the primary user and vehicular as secondary. Streets will be engineered at a 1:3 ratio to the structures that outline them in order to slow traffic and be pedestrian friendly.

### Hours of Operation:

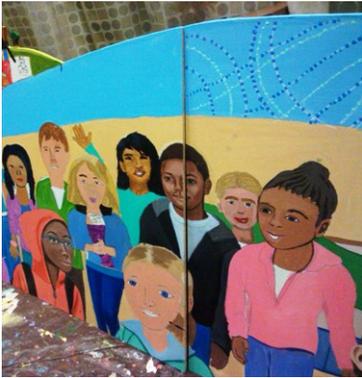
class times and school functions maintain normal hours. Extended hours will be available for areas open to the public such as recreational facilities, and the library and media center.

### Ownership:

new joint-use facility financing plans between the communities, service providers, and the school will replace existing state or federal facility financing plans.

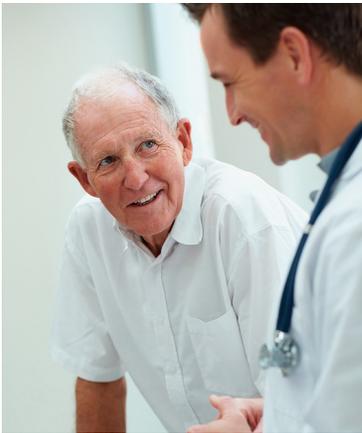
# The Design

## Community School:



Community School: A mixed-use, central location, providing services and opportunities for children, families, and adults in the Northern Cass Community. Imagine a place where education, community services, arts, and recreation programs were integrated to not only serve, but bridge the gap between rural towns.

Northern Cass Public School has an enrollment of 534 students in K-12. Six rural towns make up the community: Hunter, Arthur, Erie, Grandin, Gardner, and Argusville (Northern Cass, 2010). The location of the school is convenient in the way that it is centrally located between all the small towns, but is inconvenienced by the distance between these towns that creates barriers within the school district and the educational facility.



Many rural students spend two hours or more a day getting to and from school. The time required to go to and from school can reduce opportunities for students to engage in extracurricular and after-school enrichment activities. Students may also travel from areas where access to community institutions such as libraries, parks, recreation centers, and theaters is limited or nonexistent. School facilities, like local governmental agencies, are financed largely by local tax dollars. It seems to make good economic sense where resources are scarce to co-locate those services that support learning and family involvement rather than adding additional strain to local economies to build and maintain multiple facilities that stand idle a majority of the time (Williams, 2006).



Engagement in community schools occurs when parents, students, school staff, and neighbors invest in the school, co-creating and owning it. There is a conscious effort to ensure that services are not merely co-located but integrated in a way that increase the social capital that goes into overcoming or removing the barriers to student, family, and community success and citizenship (Williams, 2006).

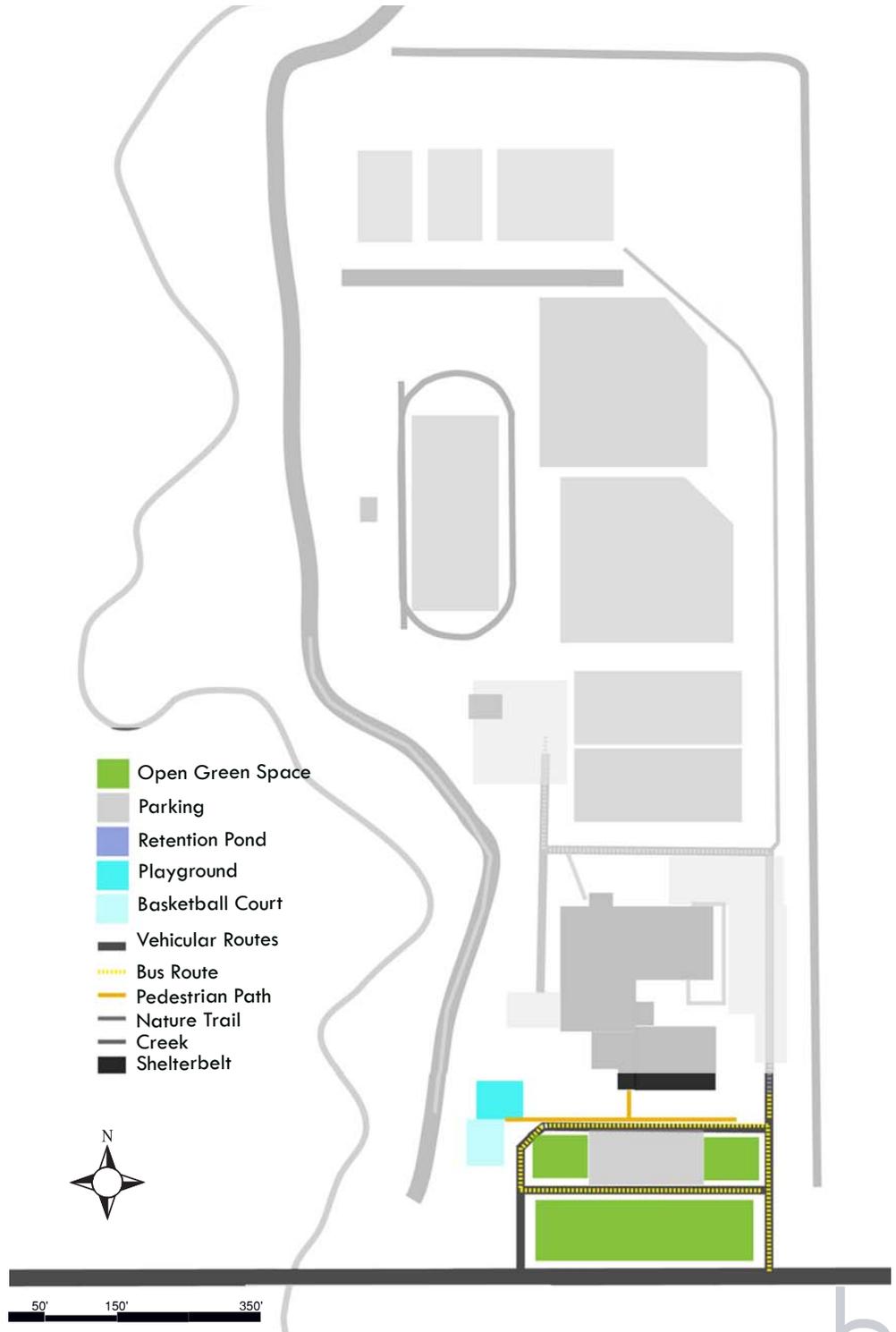


# The Design

## Areas of Emphasis:

### ENTRANCE TO THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL:

The south side of the school building is currently the main entrance and bus drop off zone. Views to and from the building are barren and unwelcoming. Landscaping and green buffers are implemented to create more pleasant view sheds.



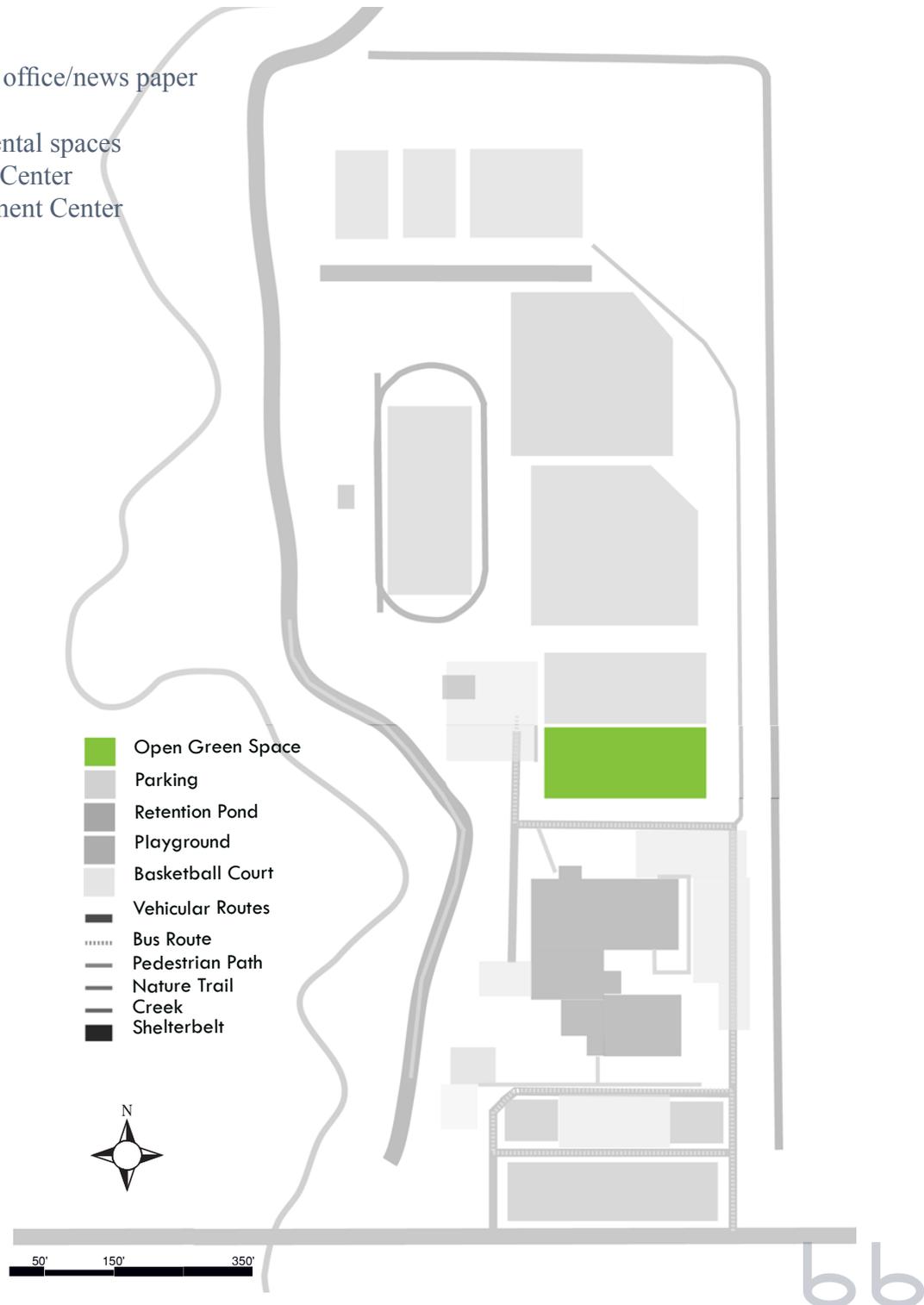
# The Design

## Areas of Emphasis:

A playground and Community Plaza are connected by sidewalks and recreational paths allowing for the interaction of all ages of community members. Users also are engaged in this area when enroute to the sporting complex or the Community Facility. The playground will include both natural elements and hardscape recreation to attract all types of ages and users.

The new community facility will house the following services:

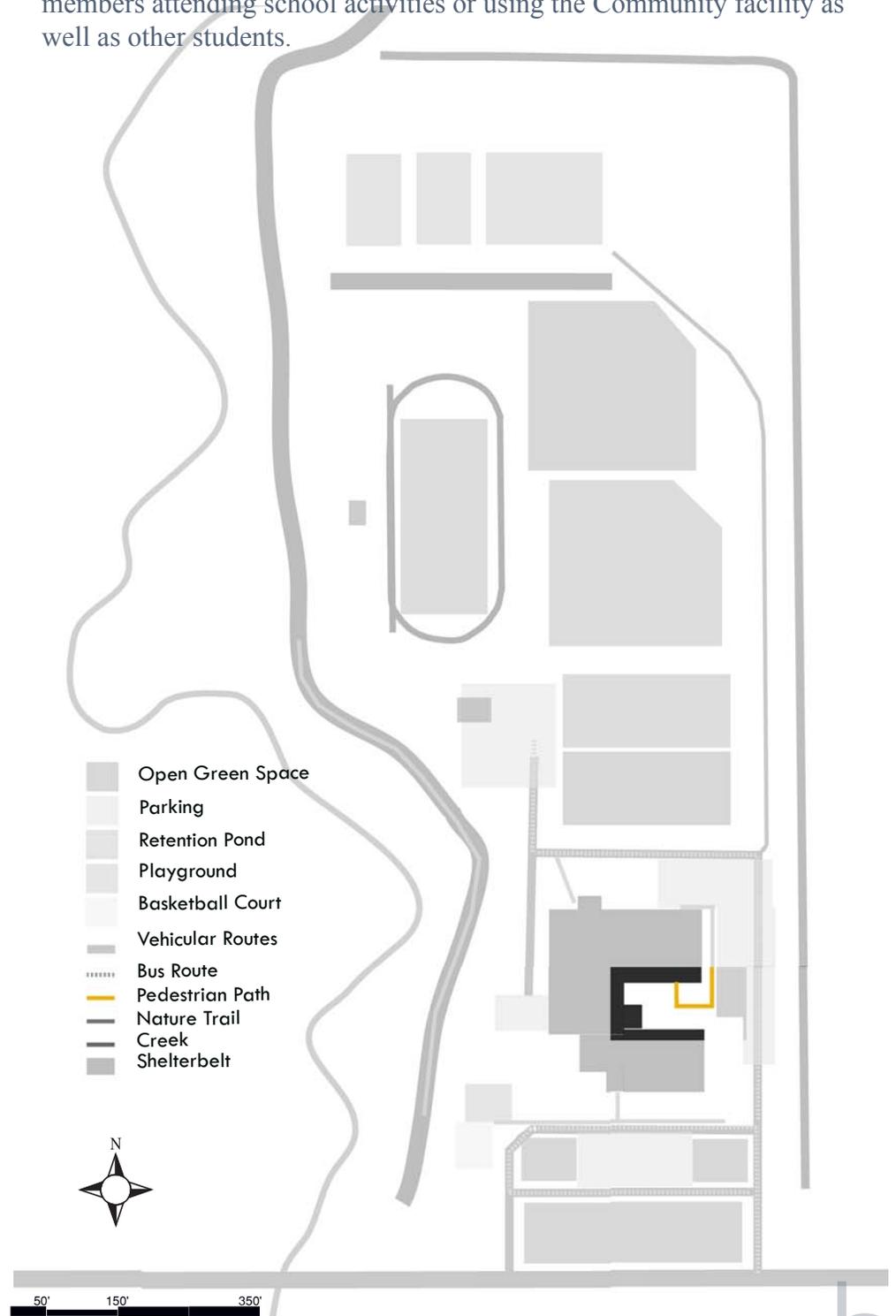
- Community Clinic
- Daycare
- Student activities/gov. office/news paper
- Graphics shop
- Community Center/Rental spaces
- Community Resource Center
- Professional Development Center



# The Design

## Areas of Emphasis:

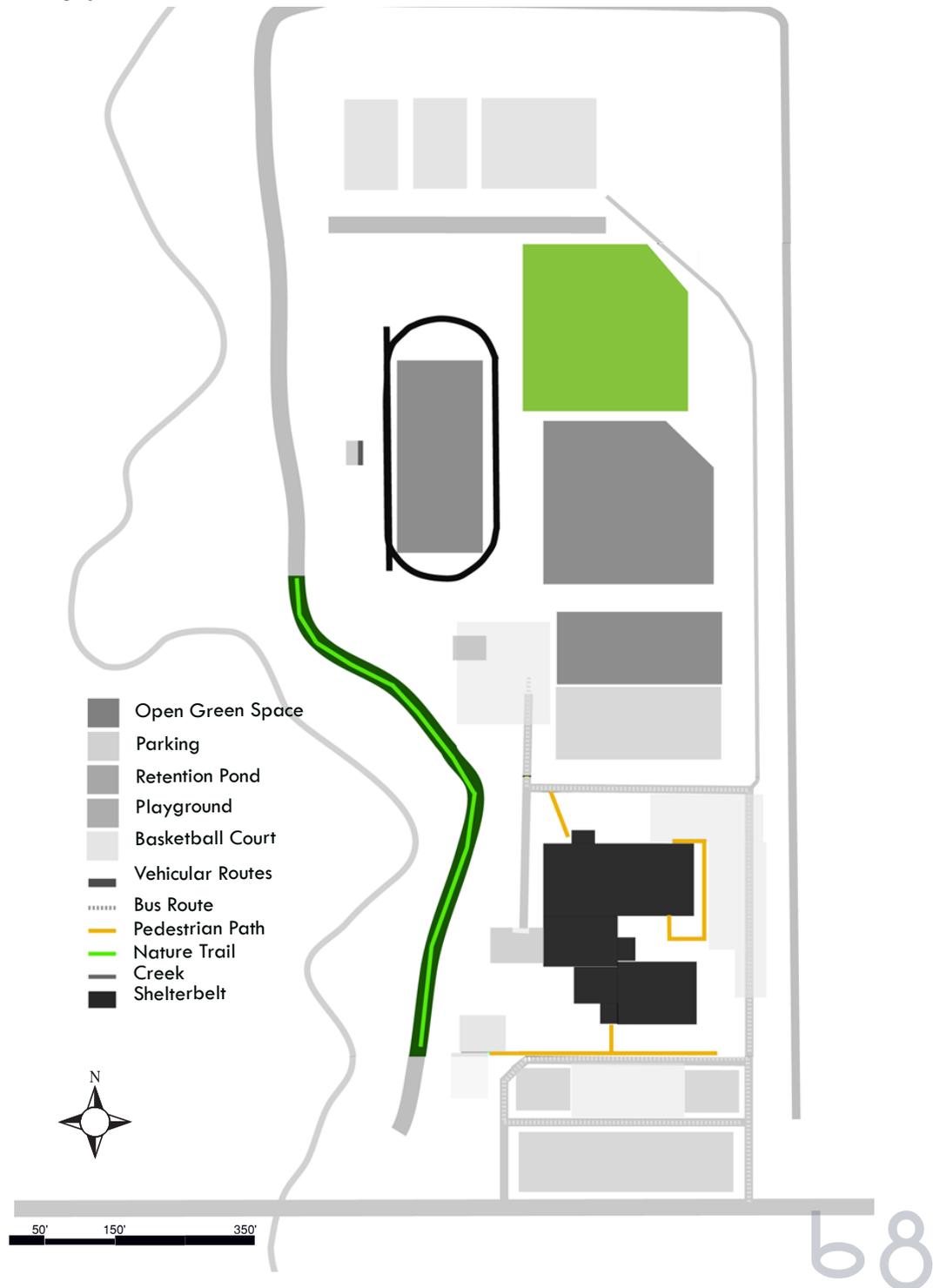
A Senior High Courtyard offers an area for the students to be expressive and creative, whether it be related to a homework assignment or for extracurricular activities. The courtyard will be a perfect stage to creatively display current topics the students are studying or are interested in. Location of the courtyard ensures recognition from community members attending school activities or using the Community facility as well as other students.



# The Design

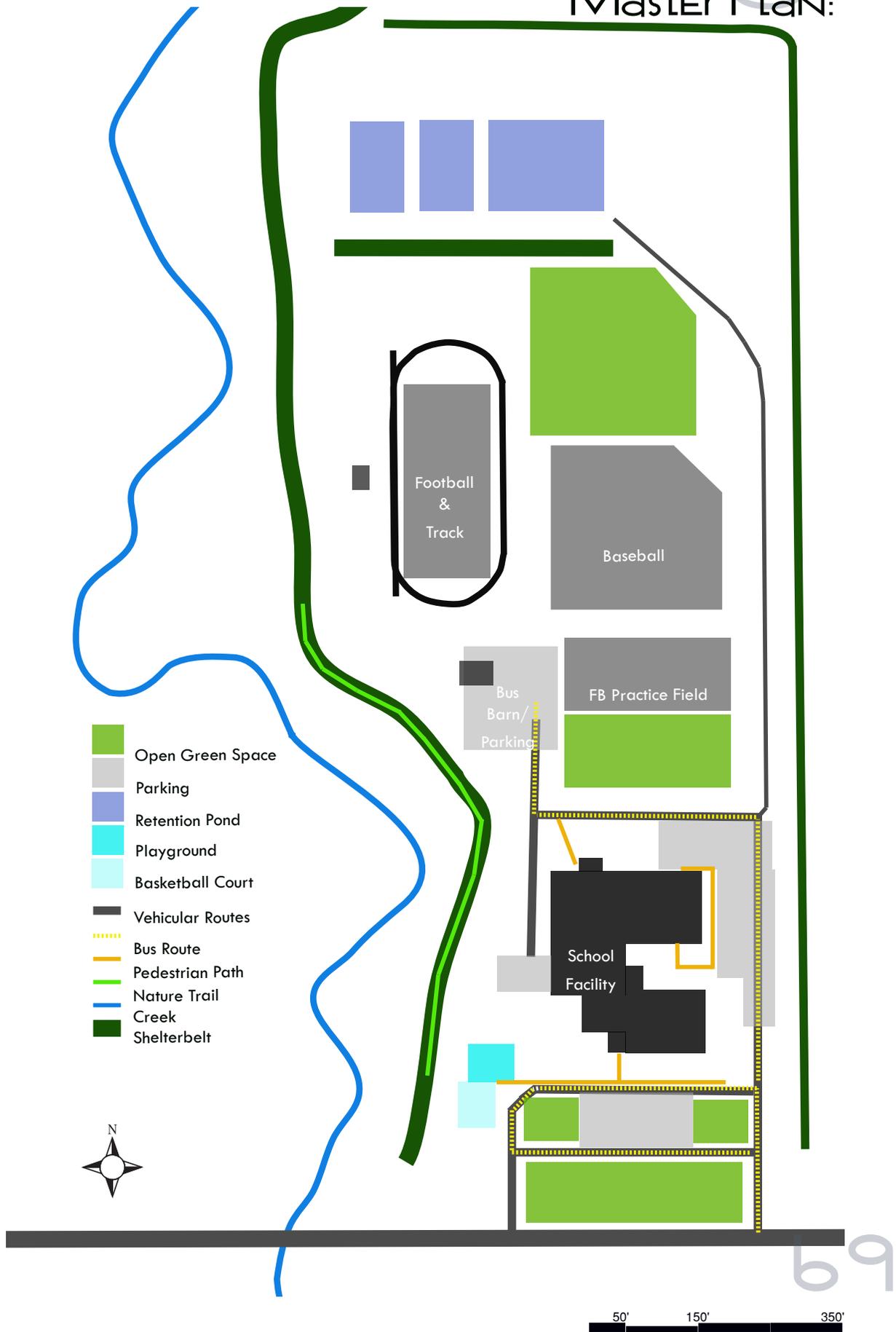
## Areas of Emphasis:

Advancement in the Sporting Complex would allow for the implementation of more recreational activities such as softball and track and field. Sidewalks and recreational pathways are strategically connected to offer running and walking paths that are marked for the user to keep track of distance. The implementation of a new grand stand/concessions stand will create a more centrally focused sporting complex enjoyable for both the home and the visitors side.



# The Design

## Master Plan:



# The DESIGN

## Areas of Emphasis:

Natural playgrounds help youth build a connection with the natural world. Research indicates that access to natural settings, is critical to children's development in every major way: intellectually, emotionally, socially, spiritually and physically. Benefits of increased free time and access to natural areas include improved concentration & impulse control, emotional coping & stress reduction, stimulation of creativity, reduces symptoms ADD and ADHD, and improved motor coordination. <http://www.naturalplaygrounds.info/>



# The Design

## Areas of Emphasis:

Natural playgrounds elements:

Hardscape games:

- Hopscotch
- 4 square
- Paw Print ABC's
- Maze
- Checkerboard
- Paw Jump
- Tic Tac Toe
- Clock
- Compass
- United States Map



Jaguar Den



TUNNEL

Hardscape design incorporated into playground pathways: Jaguar tracks chasing deer tracks, their favorite prey.

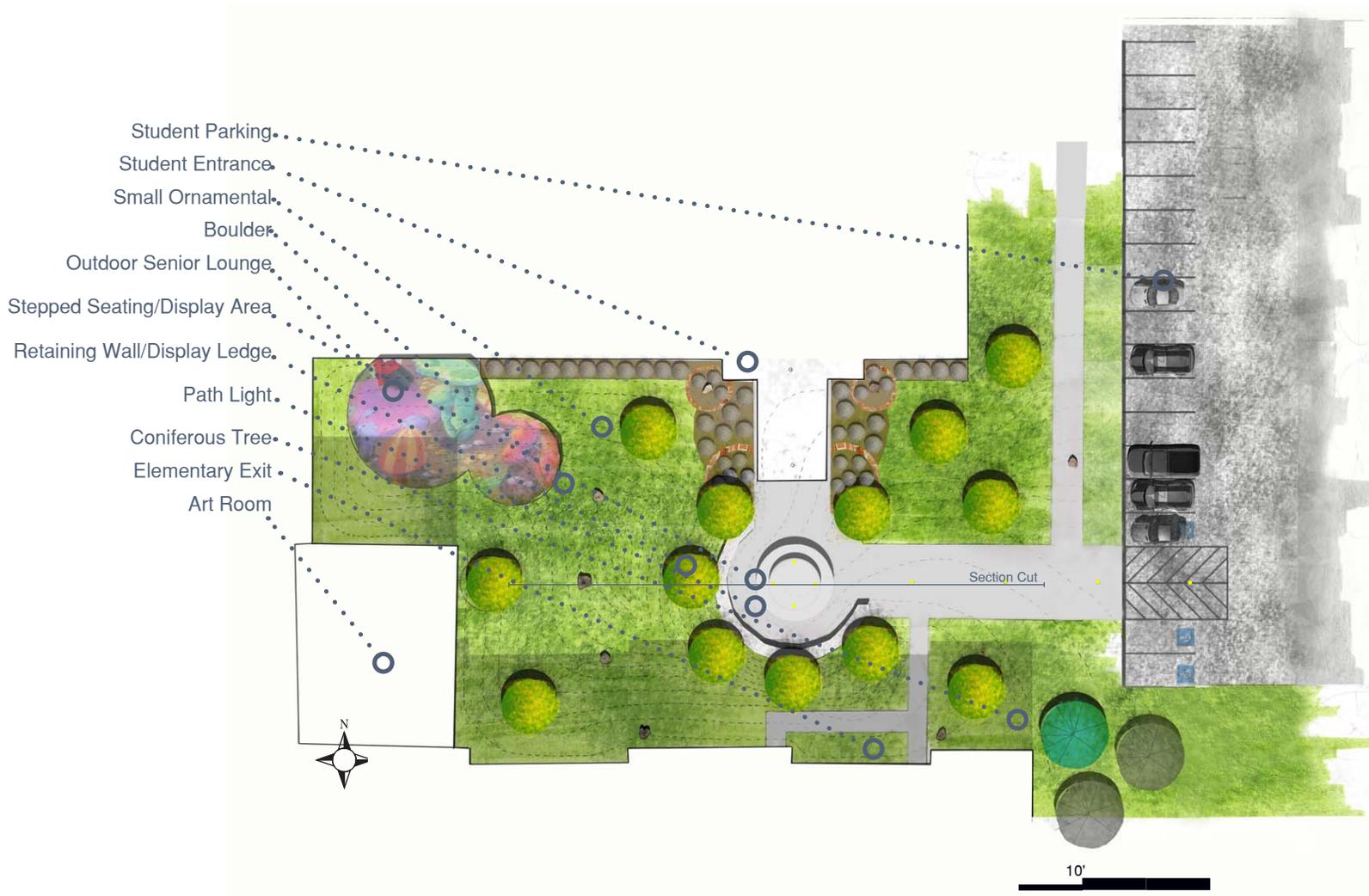


Log Jump

# The Design

## Areas of Emphasis:

The SENIOR High Courtyard is designed to engage students in creative arts and allow them to manipulate as they please. Whether it be a class assignment or extracurricular activity.



# The Design

Areas of Emphasis:  
The Senior High Courtyard:



Outdoor Senior Lounge

- Examples:
- Ground Painting
  - Rock Painting
  - Mural
  - Sculpture Display



Student Courtyard

# The Design

Areas of Emphasis:  
The Senior High Courtyard:



# The Design

## Areas of Emphasis:

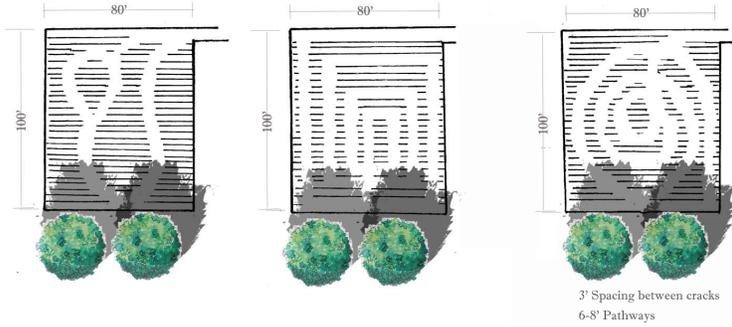
### The Senior High Courtyard:



Student Courtyard Section

# The Design

## Areas of Emphasis:



A use to be basketball court is converted to a crack garden. A less expensive option than removing the the concrete pad. This also offers a clean ground surface for school children to engage in care for this garden. Shade trees planted at the south end of the garden offer protection from the scorching sun. Cracks in the concrete are created with a jackhammer.



Images courtesy of <http://www.cmgsite.com/projects/gardens/crack-garden/>.



# The Design

## Areas of Emphasis:

Entrance to Community Campus.  
Landscape design that embeds the facility into its natural environment will create a welcoming, comfortable, sense of community.

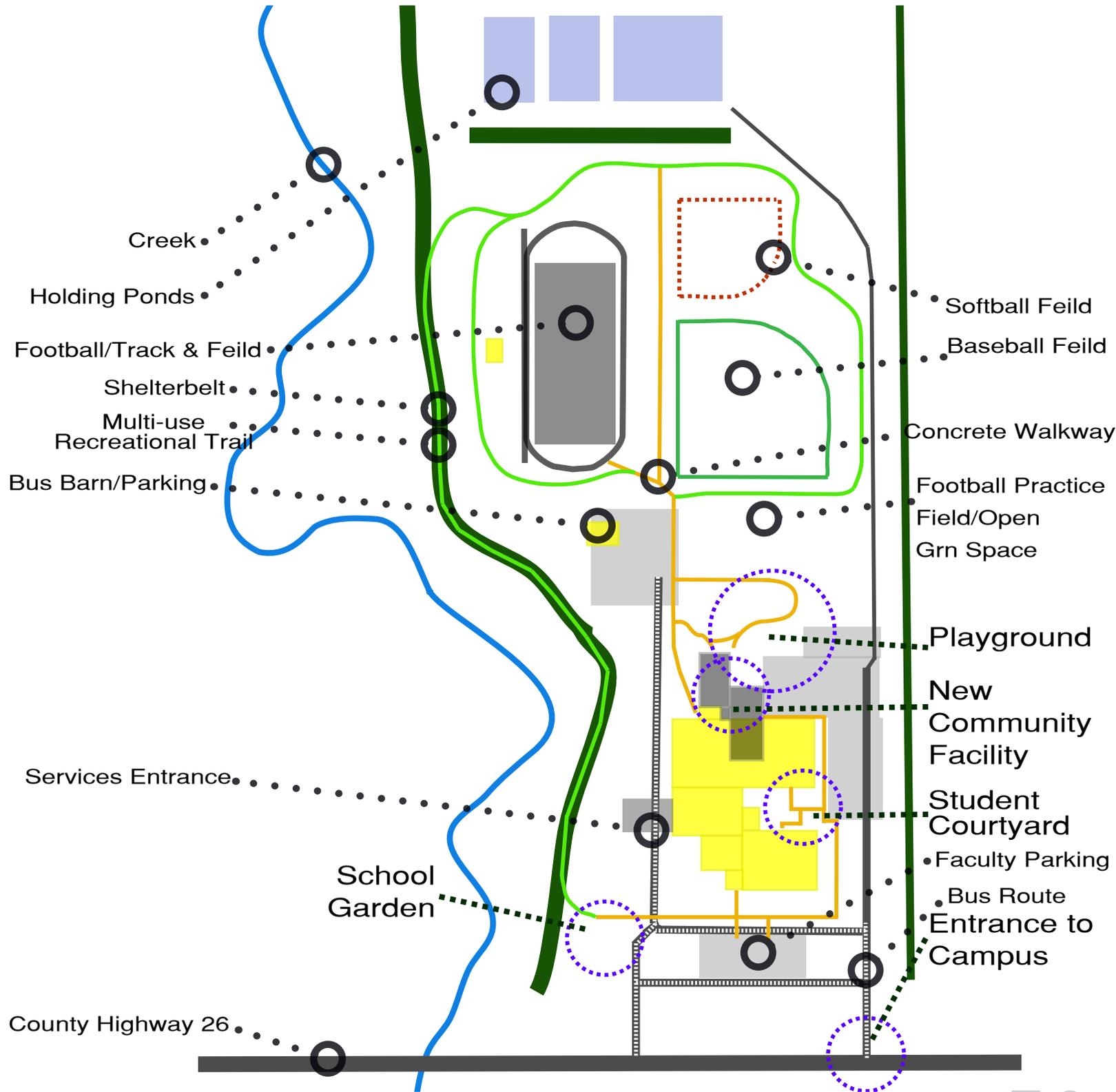


Entrances and high traffic areas incorporate implementations of community pride to create a welcoming and enjoyable environment for all users.



# The DESIGN

## COMMUNITY School Campus Master Plan:

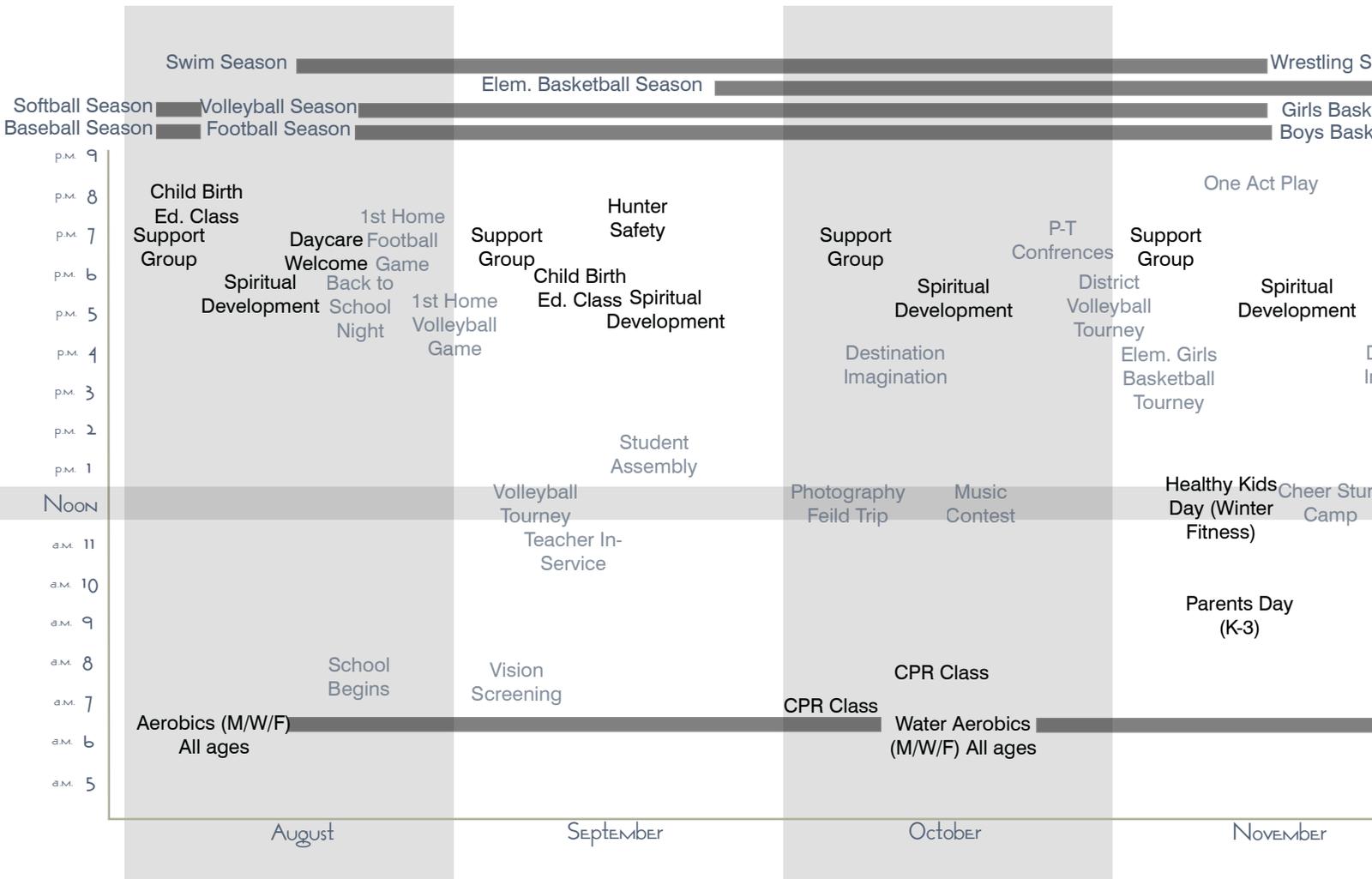




# The Design

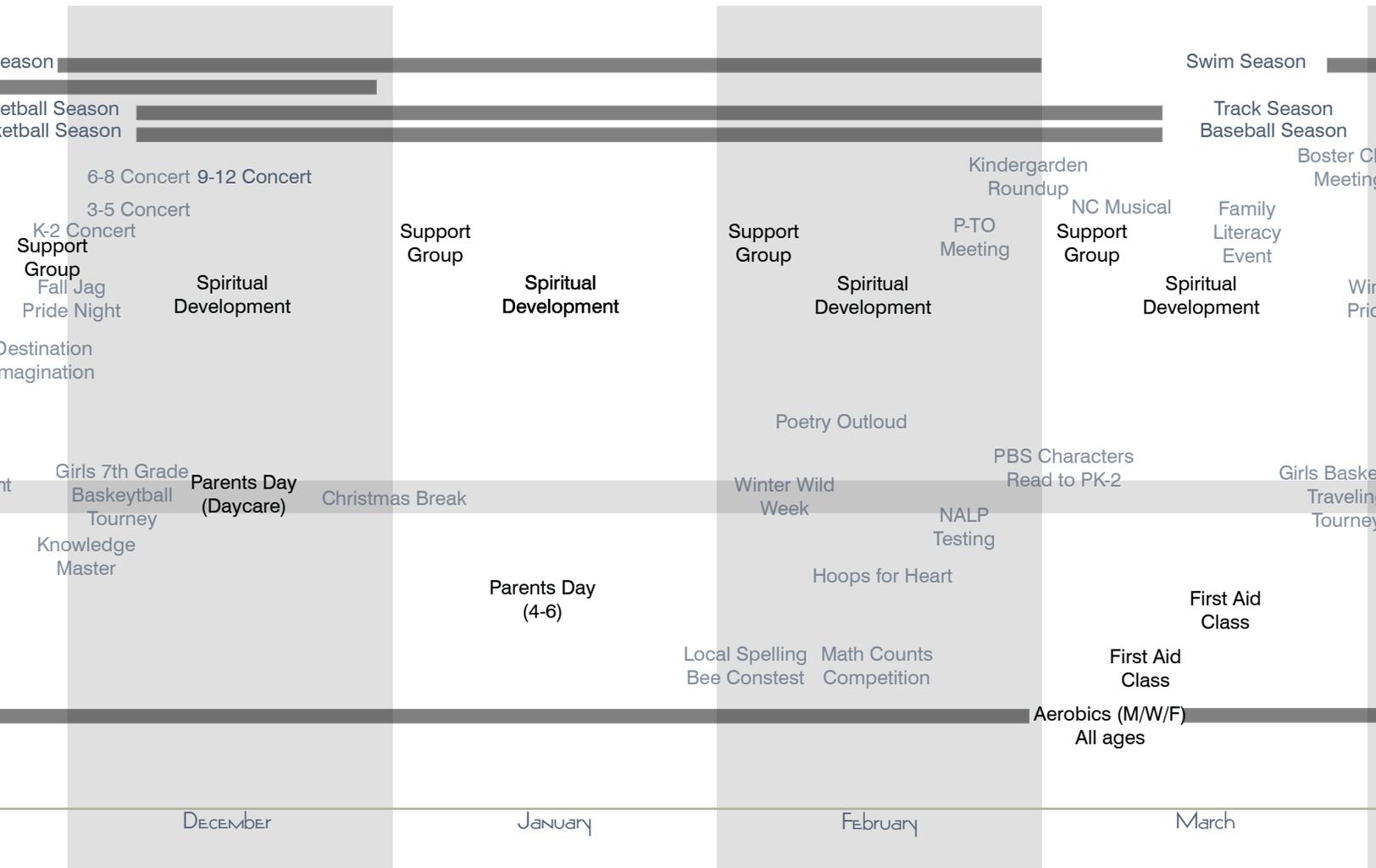
## COMMUNITY SCHOOL TIMELINE:

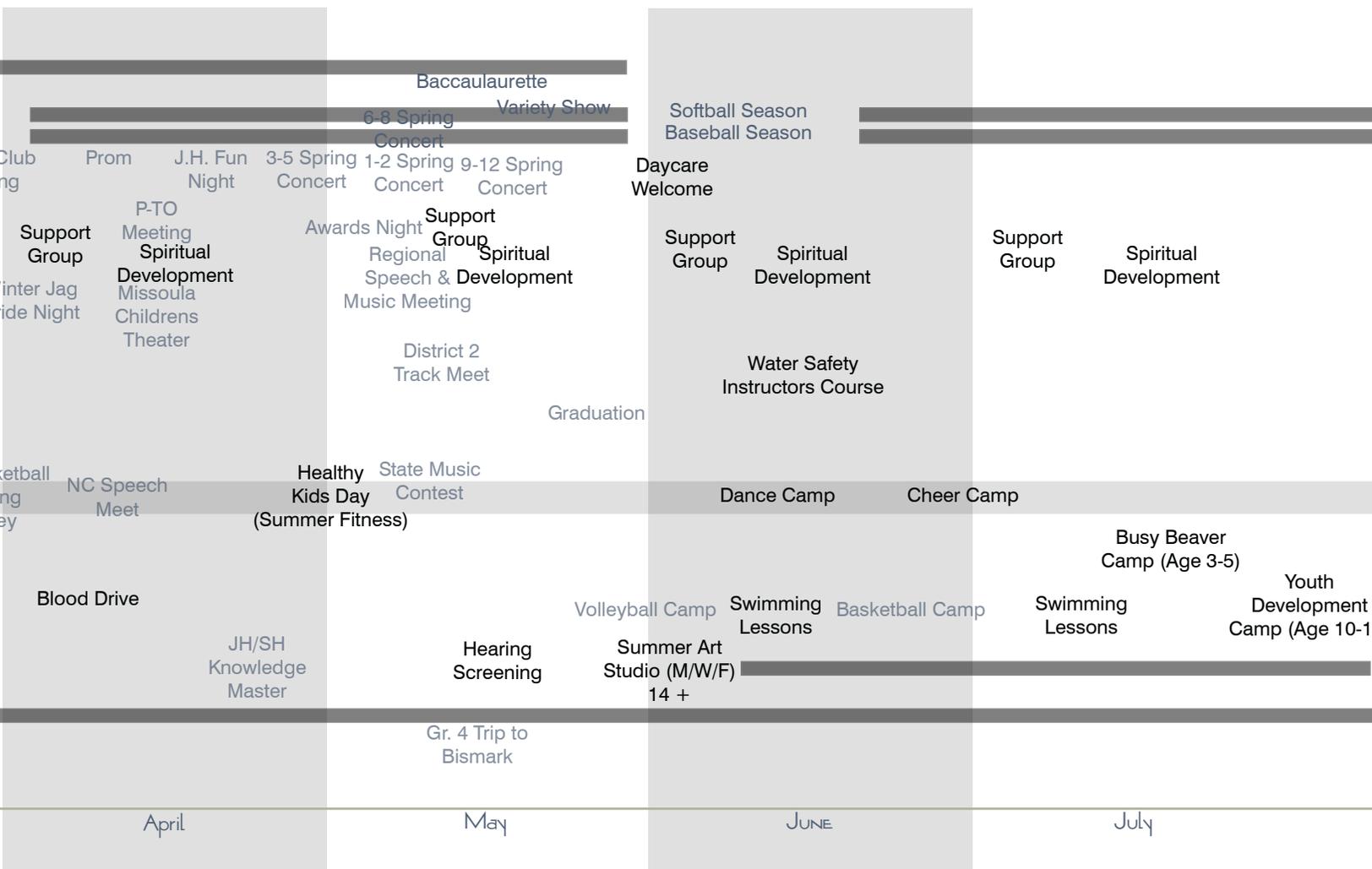
Defines some of the uses of the Community School facilities. Events in grey represent what currently takes place within the Northern Cass school building. Those listed in black represent events brought about by development of a Community School. Time line begins with the start of the school year.



# The Design

## COMMUNITY SCHOOL TIMELINE:





# Contact Information:



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Gardner, North Dakota

## North Dakota State University:

“We derive strength and vitality from each other and from the diverse  
COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.”

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