



## Executive Summary

As a result of the small group work activity  
Community Engagement Session #3 • May 25, 2022

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Nearly 75 people participated in the second Unite U-46 community engagement session on May 25, 2022. Twenty-three individuals signed in at the in-person session at the U-46 Welcome Center. Fifty-two people logged in for the virtual Zoom session.

Keri VanSant and B Sanborn from DLR Group provided an informational presentation about how facilities impact student learning and teaching.

Following the presentation, participants worked in ten small groups virtually and in person to complete the tasks discussed below. To view the presentation and verbatim responses, visit [UniteU46.org](http://UniteU46.org). Following is a summary of the responses from the groups.

### **Task #1: Front Page News**

**As a group, discuss this evening's presentation. If you were writing a newspaper article about the presentation that focused on how schools are different today than they were when you went to school, what would be the first thing you would mention in your story? What three to four additional facts about schools today you would include?**

The responses to the first thing participants would mention in their newspaper stories were varied, but there were some common themes. Three groups mentioned the shift from teacher-centered to student-centered facilities, while three also mentioned ideas tied to access to collaborative spaces. Two groups had comments related to technology and internet.

When looking at the additional facts participants would include in a story about how schools are different today than they were when they went to school, four groups highlighted collaborative spaces and team building, with one group reporting, "providing collaborative spaces to build relationships and encourage creative learning," while another group noted an, "emphasis on collaboration."

Three of the groups commended how spaces today are varied to meet the different needs of students. One group wrote, "balance student needs - wellness, mental, physical, emotional and academic." Another noted, "Lots of options for seating so students can choose where they learn best."

Two groups noted the differences in safety and security. Two groups also asked questions about open spaces and how that impacts teaching methods. In addition, two groups focused on outdoor learning environments and teaching the, "importance of care for the environment."

## **Task #2: Dream Big!**

**First, think ahead ten years to 2032:**

**How does your group think education will be different then? Please list two ways it will be different and how they will impact U-46 building planning today.**

When responding about how education will be different in ten years and how these changes will impact building planning, many of the comments were related to providing spaces that support self-guided learning in flexible, open spaces that meet the demands of needed technology.

Half of the groups listed technology as a way education will be different in the future and how it will impact U-46 building planning. Two groups suggested investing more in technology as U-46 plans for the future and highlighted the importance of this being equitable across buildings. One group highlighted that there would be greater use of technology, one highlighted how technology would change, and one focused on how it will influence the way students are taught.

Three groups mentioned that there will need to be spaces for students to learn at their own pace, with one group reporting, "Students may work at their own pace to meet minimum requirements and not on a one size fits all plan." Related to this was the thought that there may be more online learning in school and at home in the future. With one group writing, "The traditional teaching model may change, and students may attend some classes in person and other classes virtually while still at their school during the day." Two groups listed the need for additional paraprofessionals and teaching support to help with this self-guided and individualized learning.

Three groups mentioned the need for flexibility in learning spaces, with one group writing, "Keeping in mind the needs of all students to allow for quiet, flexible and various learning environments and learning styles within the buildings," and another highlighting the importance of equity amongst buildings, "Moveable walls would be great but what happens in buildings that are not being renovated? How will this impact equality between buildings? Shared experiences won't be the same for everyone."

Two groups specifically mentioned spaces for social emotional learning and support, with one highlighting the importance of this at the preK level.

**Now, dream big:**

**If your group had the opportunity to build the ideal school for the success of all students and their learning styles, what are the top five features that would be included in this building?**

Six groups reported topics related to outdoor learning environments and a connection to nature. Five groups reported that an ideal school would include common areas and collaborative spaces. Two of these groups specifically mentioned the need for spaces for teachers to collaborate and focus. Five groups also highlighted the importance of quiet spaces and sensory spaces to support student learning. There were also comments related to providing student choice in the learning environment.

Four groups had responses related to technology, with one group specifically mentioning "technology to meet the needs of all learners." Three groups listed accessibility and an all-inclusive environment as top features they would include. Two groups mentioned that they would include flexible seating options.

### **Task #3 Building Update Priorities**

**As we develop our recommendations, the following criteria could be used to prioritize U-46 building updates. Keep in mind that criteria involving overall safety and security, ADA accessibility and indoor environmental quality (temperature controls, ventilation, lighting, etc.) will be addressed with any building updates or new construction.**

**Please rank each of the criteria below by level of importance with 1 being the lowest level of importance and 5 being the highest level of importance. If there are any additional criteria you would like included please list them in the empty boxes.**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Average Ranking</b>
Improve equitable access to programs at more buildings districtwide.	4.78
Ensure existing facilities are proactively maintained.	4.67
Integrate flexible, age-appropriate furniture to support teaching and learning.	4.67
Replace buildings where the condition has reached the point where they are more expensive to repair or renovate than replace.	4.50
Improve outdoor spaces including playgrounds and greenspace.	4.44
Balance enrollment at buildings throughout the District by reducing class sizes where needed.	4.44
Update schools to support the increasing technology needs of our students (maker spaces, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) labs, etc.).	4.38
Improve traffic circulation at school sites including parking and drop-off and pick-up access.	4.33
Provide a variety of learning environments including collaborative and outdoor learning spaces to support best practices for teaching and learning.	4.33
When appropriate, update existing infrastructure and systems such as roofs, HVAC systems and plumbing to extend their useful life.	4.29
Improve energy efficiency and provide more comfortable learning environments.	4.22
Ensure school buildings support hands-on opportunities for programs that allow students to develop entrepreneurial skills such as growing food, creating and selling.	4.17
Replace aging facilities that no longer meet the instructional needs of our students.	4.13
Integrate environmentally friendly, sustainable features that are linked to teaching and learning opportunities.	4.11
Reduce travel times for students by having as many students as possible attend a school near where they live.	3.86
Provide visitor and community access and use of schools.	3.00

### **Consensus Points**

- As Unite U-46 develops its recommendations for our school buildings, the future needs of students and teachers should be incorporated. This includes developing collaborative, flexible spaces that encourage group and self-learning, spaces that adapt to changing technology and spaces that integrate with the outdoors and nature.
- Knowing the building update criteria that involve overall safety and security, ADA accessibility, and indoor environmental quality (temperature controls, ventilation, lighting, etc.) will be addressed with any building updates or new construction, Unite U-46 participants believe the following criteria should be the top ten areas for consideration as recommendations are developed:
  - Improve equitable access to programs at more buildings districtwide.
  - Ensure existing facilities are proactively maintained.
  - Integrate flexible, age-appropriate furniture to support teaching and learning.
  - Replace buildings where the condition has reached the point where they are more expensive to repair or renovate than replace.
  - Improve outdoor spaces including playgrounds and greenspace.
  - Balance enrollment at buildings throughout the District by reducing class sizes where needed.
  - Update schools to support the increasing technology needs of our students (maker spaces, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) labs, etc.).
  - Improve traffic circulation at school sites including parking and drop-off and pick-up access.
  - Provide a variety of learning environments including collaborative and outdoor learning spaces to support best practices for teaching and learning.
  - When appropriate, update existing infrastructure and systems such as roofs, HVAC systems and plumbing to extend their useful life.

**For a complete listing of all responses,  
see the CES #3 Verbatim Response Document on the website, [UniteU46.org](http://UniteU46.org)**