NATIONAL COVID-19 OUTDOOR LEARNING INITIATIVE

CREATING OUTDOOR SPACES

EMERGENCY SCHOOLYARD DESIGN VOLUNTEERS

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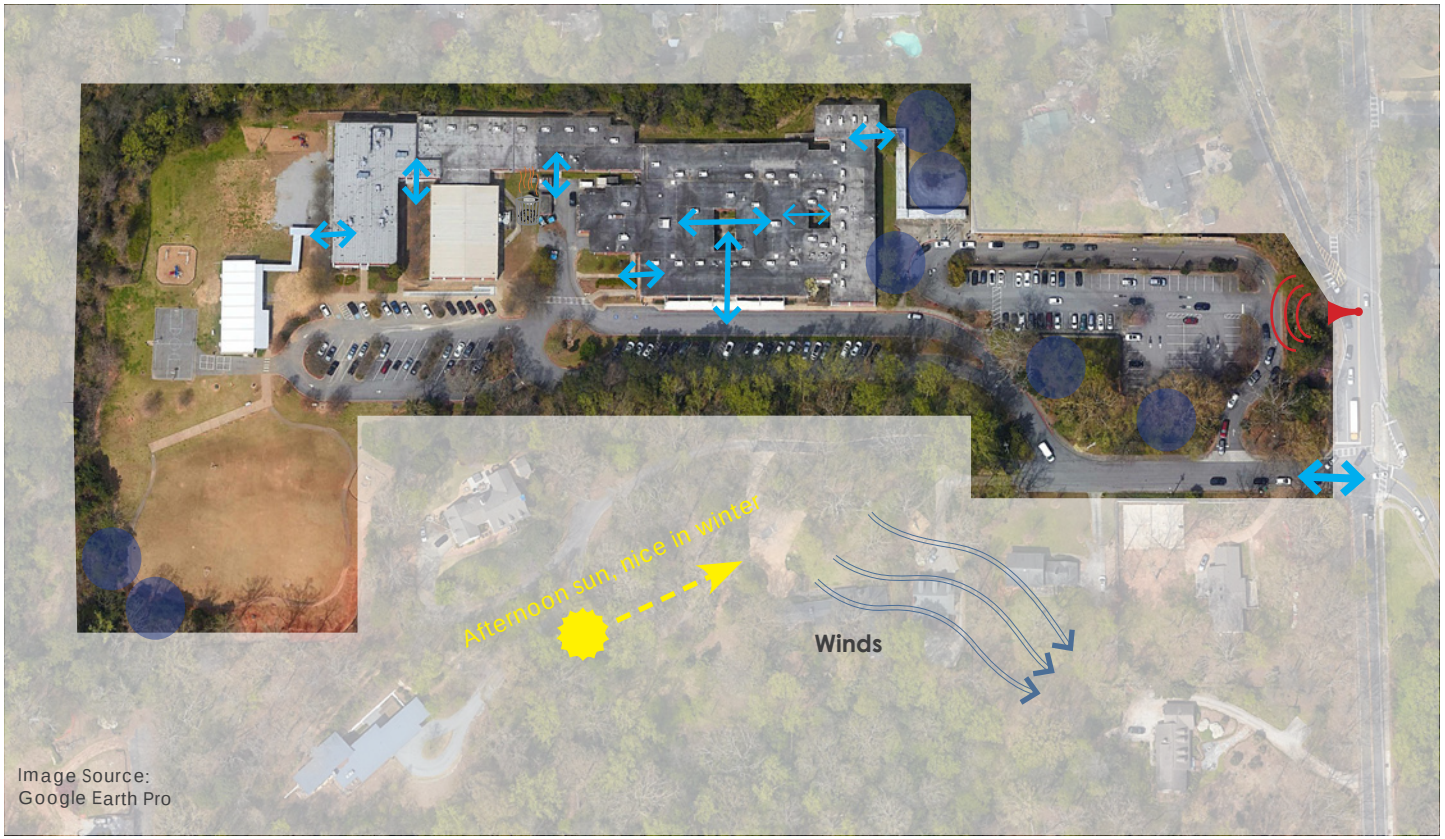
HIGH POINT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL — SANDY SPRINGS, GA

High Point Elementary School is located in the metro Atlanta region and was first developed in the 1960s. The school went through many expansion from the early 1980s through the early 2000s. Located in a dense suburban environment with approximately 600 students, our goal is to accommodate at least 50% of the student body in some capacity on site. With comfortable falls and springs and cool to cold winters, this site is a fantastic opportunity for outdoor learning.

Site Analysis Considerations

High Point Elementary School
Sandy Springs, Georgia

School Characteristics



0 50 100 feet

Shade and Shelter

Noise, Odors, & Other Nuisances

Entry from street

Entry from building

Entry from classroom

Students

- 600 students in grades PK-5
- 30 PK-5 classes.
- Need 50 small breakout areas for 12 students each. We may not get all students outside, but should be able to accommodate many of them.
- Provide a trauma-informed design approach (likely for all urban schools)

School Grounds

- Suburban location approx. 10 acres
- Relatively quiet area, surrounded by single family homes other than main entry that is visually removed from the campus
- Old schoolhouse is on site- historically cultural feature to celebrate.
- Minimal outdoor storage available.
- High Point Road NE has sidewalks, many of the surrounding neighborhoods do not.

Climate

- Four distinct seasons: crisp fall, cold winters with but minimal snowfall, warm wet spring, and hot, humid summers. Heavy rain, high wind, extreme heat, extreme cold, and poor air quality are all factors.

BLA
BUSCH LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

High Point Elementary School
Sandy Springs, Georgia

School Characteristics


1a


1b


2


3

Photographs, top row to bottom row

1. Mature trees at woodland edges are opportunities for shaded learning environments
2. School courtyards can be utilized as outdoor spaces that also make keeping an eye on children easier.
3. The elevation change creates an opportunity for amphitheater seating.
4. An existing old school house on site can act as a great historic educational opportunities for teachers.
5. Existing brick seatwalls offer built in student learning zone.


4


5

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BUSCH LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Potential Outdoor Classrooms
Using Existing Tree Canopy and Shade for Mild Weather

High Point Elementary School
Sandy Springs, Georgia

Scenario #1: Low Cost

Climate Considerations

- Local climate varies seasonally
- Classes will require protection from sun, and rain and appropriate clothing to keep everyone warm and dry

Climate Adaptation Strategies

- Use outdoor classrooms as "Plan A" when the weather is nice; go inside or online when it is raining or too cold
- Place seating in areas where existing tree canopies provide morning or afternoon shade, and away from street to reduce noise

Use and Augment Existing Infrastructure

- Use the existing courtyards as possible (mats, stumps, benches, and/or existing desks/tables)
- Utilize existing old schoolhouse on site (and clean!)
- Add storage sheds for class materials
- Preserve space for gardening and nature play, particularly one area that would work well for veggies and the other area between two buildings could act as a learning opportunity of wetland plants and animal area. This space is also surrounded by three "walls" of architecture to make keeping an eye on the kids easier.
- Existing school house could be cleaned and utilized with all windows open. Clean landscape around school house.

Scenario #1: Outdoor Capacity

Max: 228 students in 19 seating areas
Max: 16 students in active garden areas
Capacity: 38% of enrolled students

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Potential Outdoor Classrooms
Provide shelter for sun and rain.

High Point Elementary School
Sandy Springs, Georgia

Scenario #2: Medium Cost

Clean up two courtyards and add new seating.

Entry from street

Entry from building

Entry from classroom

Existing School house

(10) Utilize existing canopy as shade as well as the school house. New shade structure placed close to existing school building for easy access. 15 students per structure.

(2) Active gardening/experiential learning area

(6) storage cart or box

Climate Considerations

Build on Scenario #1

- Install shelters to protect from rain and sun. Ideal shelters could be adjustable in height to allow winter sun.
- Add outdoor heaters and/or provide rain and snow gear so students will be dry and warm when weather is wet and cold

Climate Adaptation Strategies

- Use outdoor classrooms as "Plan A" when the weather is nice or in mild rain and snow; go inside or online when it is too cold or harsh

Use and Augment Existing Infrastructure

- Add low cost seating (mats, stumps, benches, and/or existing desks/tables)
- Install shelters to protect from rain, snow, and sun in areas away from street
- Add storage sheds for class materials
- Preserve and activate space for gardening and nature play

Scenario #2: Outdoor Capacity

- Max: 150 students in 10 covered seating areas
- Max: 16 students in active garden areas
- Capacity: 31% of enrolled students

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Potential Outdoor Classrooms
Provide shelter for sun and rain.

High Point Elementary School
Sandy Springs, Georgia

Scenario #3: Green Infrastructure Investment

0 50 100 feet

Redesign courtyards to create greatest use of space.

Entry from street

Entry from building

Entry from classroom

Existing School house

(1) Utilize existing canopy as shade as well as the school house. New shade structure placed close to existing school building for easy access.

(2) Active gardening/experiential learning area

(3) Woodland decking and amphitheater seating opportunities.

(6) storage cart or box

Climate Considerations

Build on Scenario #2

- Add new decking in woodland areas that can act as amphitheater seating for classrooms. Utilize woodlands and teaching tools beyond the shaded spaces they provide.

Climate Adaptation Strategies

- Use outdoor classrooms as "Plan A" when the weather is nice or in mild rain; go inside or online when it is too cold or harsh

Use and Augment Existing Infrastructure

- Preserve and activate space for gardening and nature play.
- Leave room and flexibility for long-term outdoor classroom vision ideas

Scenario #3: Outdoor Capacity

- We may be able to get a vast majority of the student body outside if all outdoor spaces are utilized on nice days.

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