

# A4LE ASSOCIATION DAYS 2021

## DIGITAL CONFERENCE



**A MacConnell Award winning architectural design shares what it took 'to get there':  
A panel discusses visioning to measured results.**

## meet the panel



**Dennis Runyan, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent  
Agua Fria Union  
High School District



**Pam Loeffelman, FAIA**  
K-12 Educational Leader  
DLR Group



**Marilyn Denison, Ed.D.**  
K-12 Education Planner  
DLR Group



**Lennie Scott-Webber, PhD**  
Owner / Principal  
INSYNC: Education Research +  
Design

## abstract excerpts

- An innovative learning place was designed and acknowledged by a **MacConnell Award 2019** with its premise as, *“Blurring the lines between ages and abilities, we will foster authentic learning and curricular exploration by expanding the definition of what a ‘place-based’ high school can be.”*
- Since the school opened, leaders have seen a **clear intrinsic motivation for students** to use the abundance of technology tools available (analogue and digital).
- In this visional learning environment, the teacher is metaphorically similar to an artist painting a colorful almost endless mural rather than planning a linear focus on ‘content.’ Both the subject matter and materials utilized are jointly selected through ownership of the student.
- **Key pillars** for learning in this school include **common intentional language** around supportive terminology, the **collective for all stakeholders** in planning, and high levels of **peer-student collaboration**, which has led to **ownership of learning** together.
- **Learners and educators thrive in an environment supporting abilities** for building relationships, providing for socialization, and supporting creativity[.
- It took a village.
- All intentional designs for both pedagogical change and building design change were **measured post-occupancy**. From both the students’ and educators’ perspectives, design of the built space impacts engagement performance
- (**p <.0001**).
- *Research shows that engagement, the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities, is the best single predictor of their learning and personal development over time.”*

## visioning



Superintendent of Agua Fria Union High School District of 8,500 students, in the State of Arizona, USA

**Vision:** *"The divorce between historically traditional classroom learning structures and the emerging potential of clearly dynamic instructional spaces will be evident at Canyon View High School. The lines between individual learning and group dynamics will become softened and enriched through a constant daily drumbeat of collaboration and collective planning" - Dr. Runyan.*



# MacConnell Video

## visioning



DLR Group, the design firm for the new school, led a series of collaborative, ideation (Co-Labs) community sessions generating a vision accommodating this shift – to become fully focused on the students learning experiences. During this Co-Lab process it also became clear that educators, as professional learners, teaching the new curricula while establishing learning experiences, might benefit from professional development of a different nature.

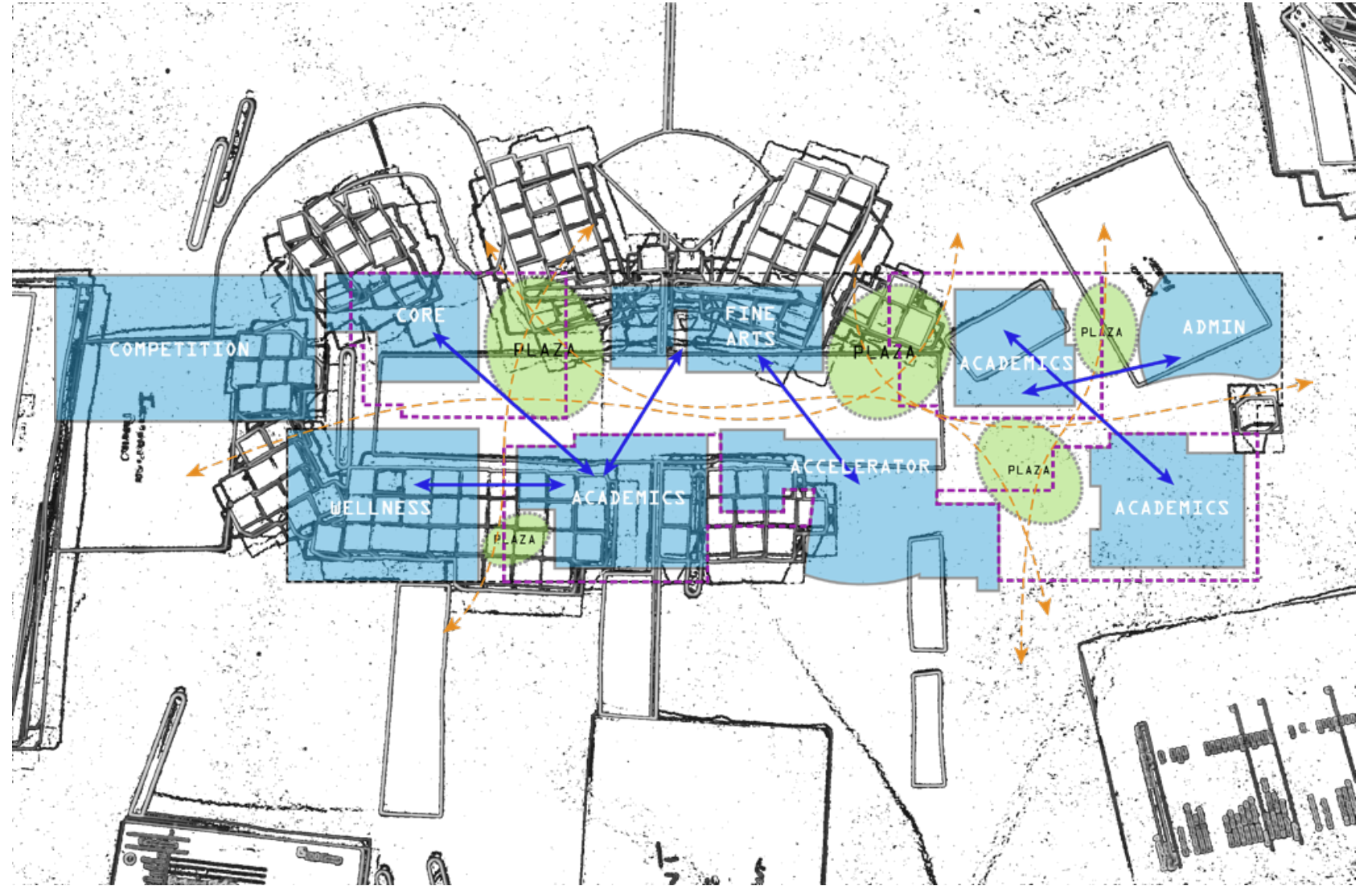


# visioning

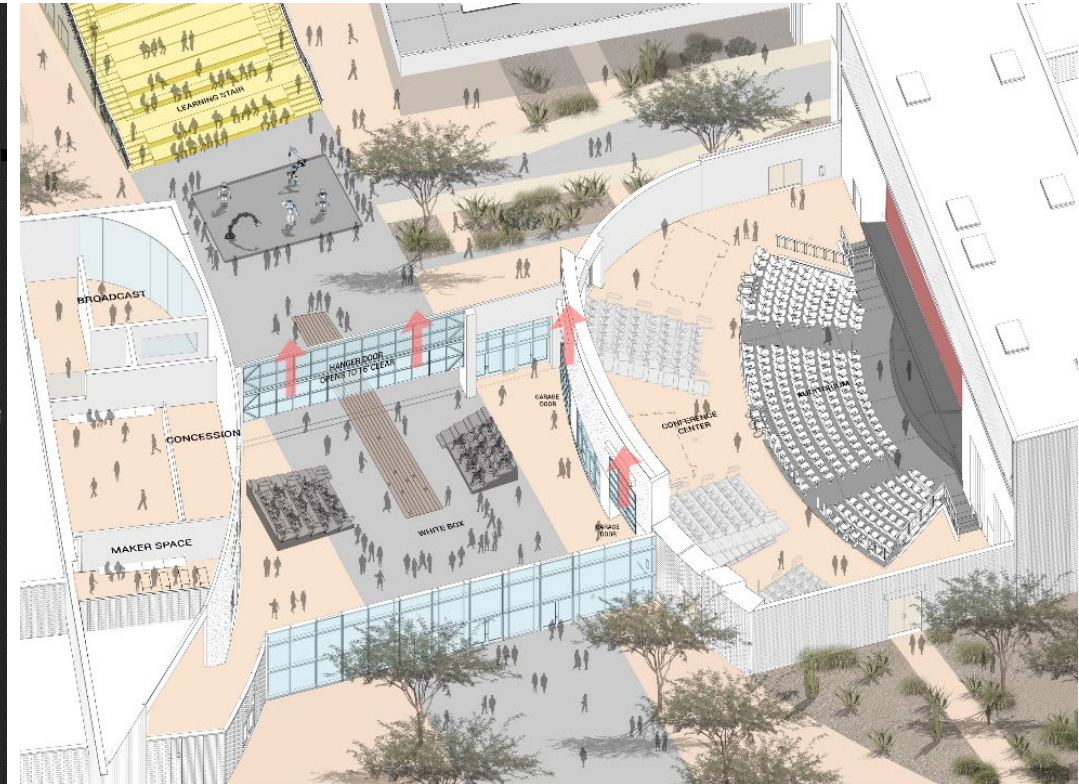
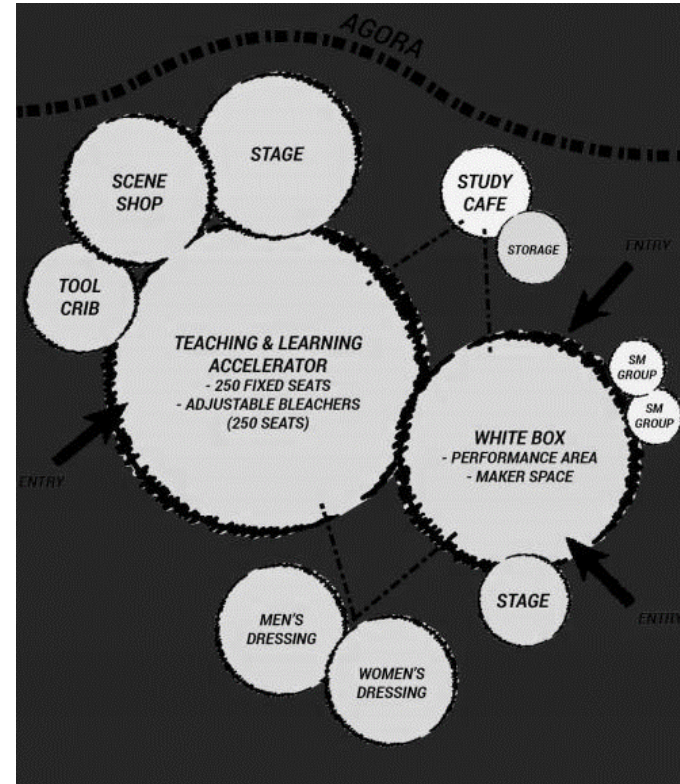
The district's vision-to-realization was challenging. It required **leadership to bring an entire community**, and an **architectural practice to 'see it'**, and then to **generate it into a new reality**; since the 'thing' had never before been realized. This chapter focuses on:

- 1) **Articulating the district's vision and how it was meant to change learning and teaching experiences**, and the challenges faced;
- 2) Recognizing how **designing to support articulated functions** gave way to opportunities to 'think outside the box' and deliver an innovative, award-winning solution;
- 3) Remembering that **teaching methods and practices would need to rely on the design of the built place**, and thus **professional development** was provided to support the 'divorce;' and
- 4) **Measuring these efforts** from both the students' and educators' perspectives post-occupancy was important.

# visioning



# the accelerator/ white box





# the "forts"

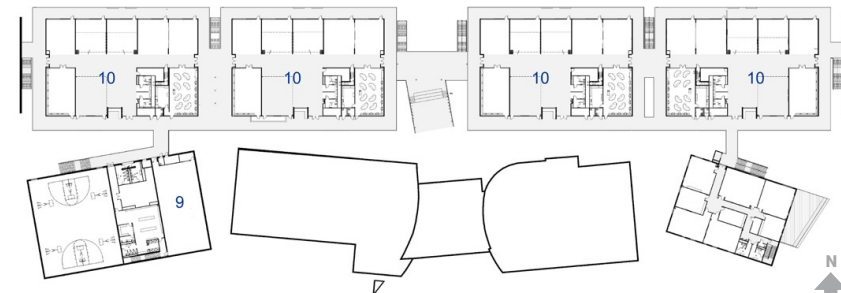


The design has made a big impact. I chose to go to this school; I could have gone anywhere. I am super excited and want to learn everyday. Not only does the environment make us light up, it also makes the teachers light up. And the students can see that in the teachers, and it makes us want to do more.

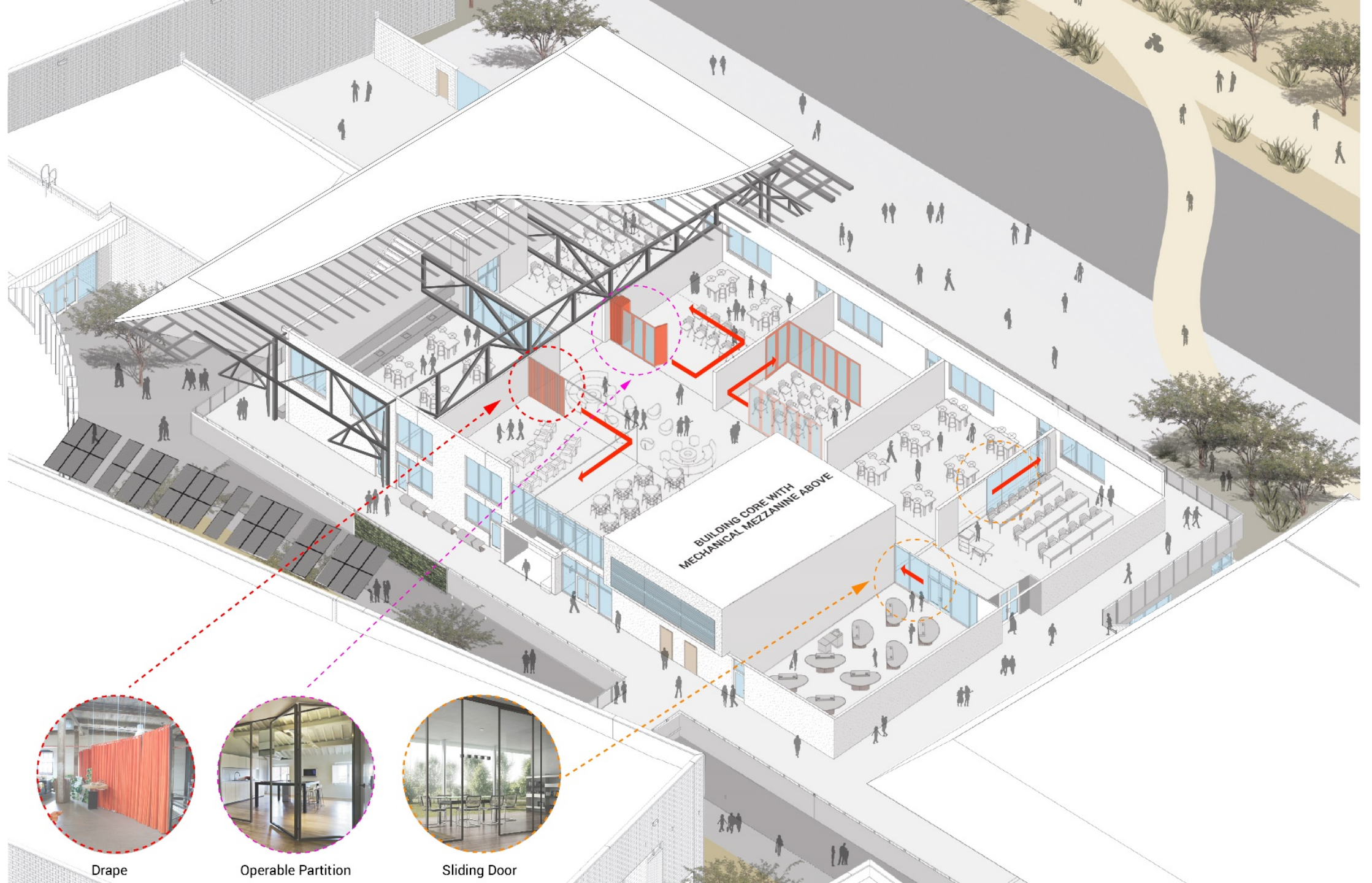
– Jade., Freshman Principal's Advisory Group



First Level



Second Level



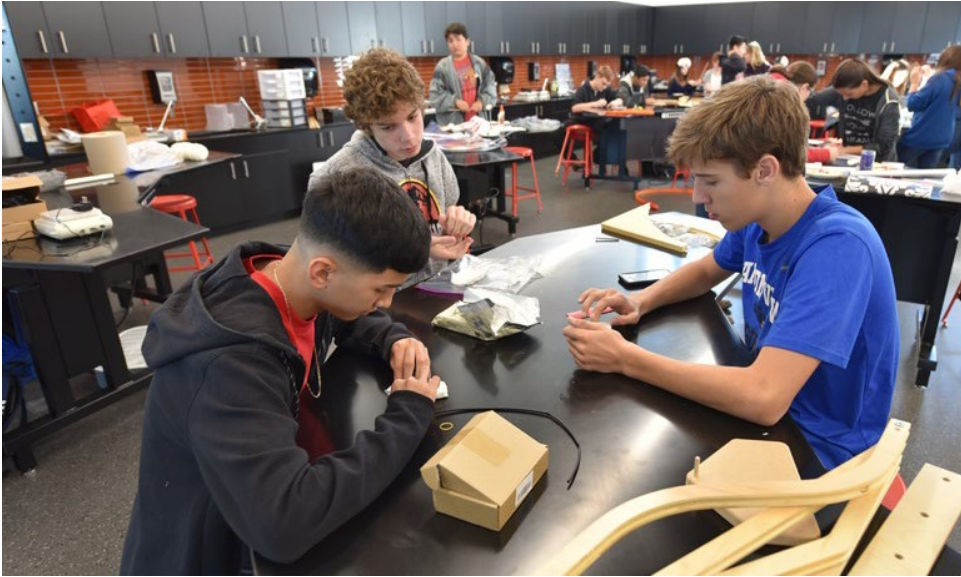
Drape



Operable Partition



Sliding Door



## mind-set changes



Lines blur between ages and abilities when **focused on authentic learning** and curricular exploration by **expanding the definition of what a 'place-based' high school** may become. These **changes affect the situational culture's premise, teaching practices, mind-sets, scheduling, and the physical designs of the formal and informal areas of buildings on learning campuses at the micro and macro levels.** Expectations of how one is allowed to learn is **more personal**, by employing **inquiry-based methods**, and allowing students to **'own their own knowledge-gathering processes.'**



**mind-set  
changes**

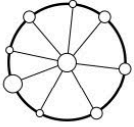
**BOLD**<sup>TM</sup>  
B R I D G I N G  
ORGANIZATION LEARNING AND DESIGN



“ I know we need to change,  
but I don't know what that looks like. ”

 DLR Group

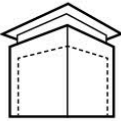
We **bridge** isolated departments around a common vision.



We develop **organizational** systems to sustainably support change.



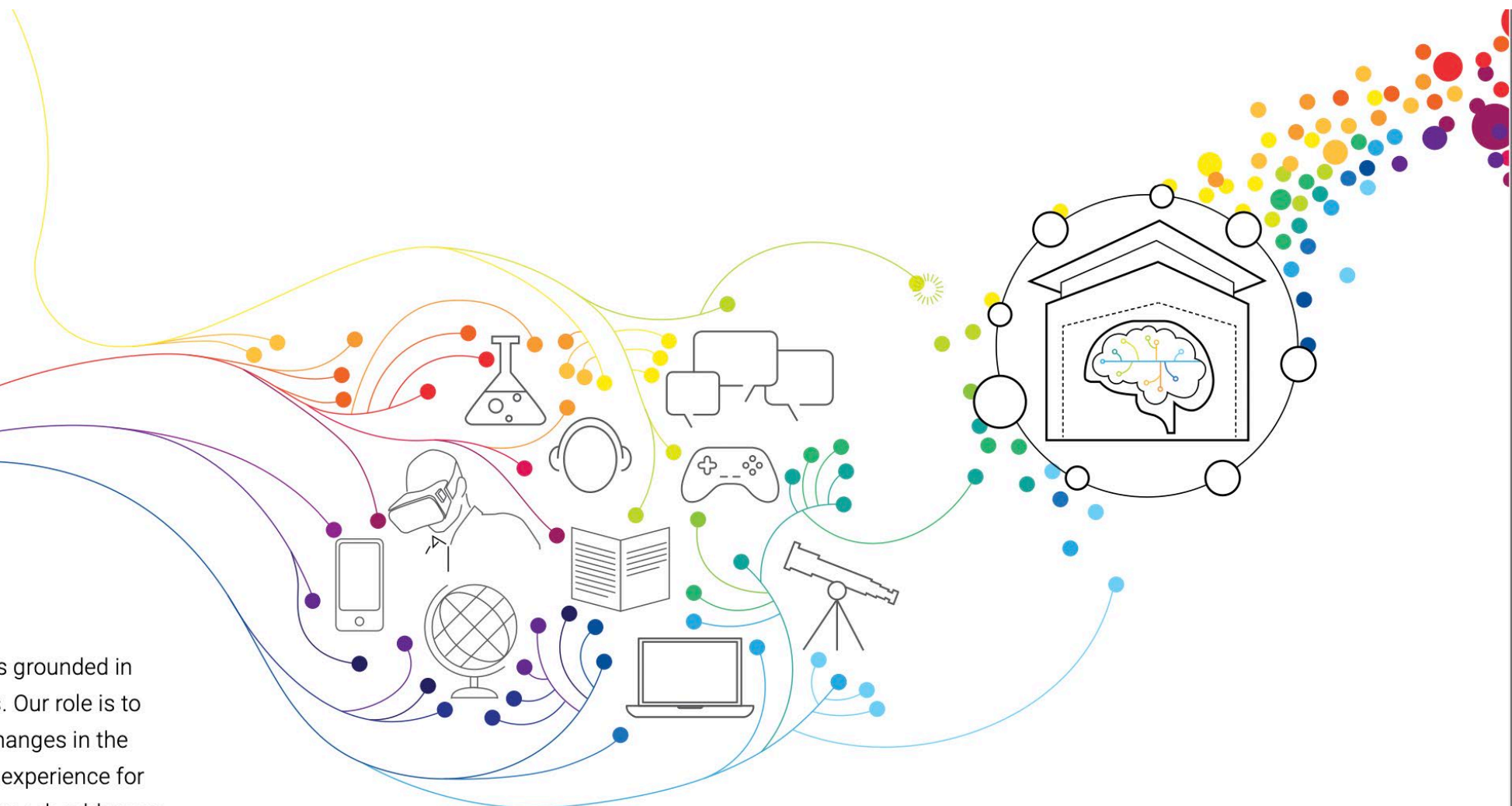
We work with your stakeholders to define a new vision for **learning**.



We align environmental **design** to support your learning model.

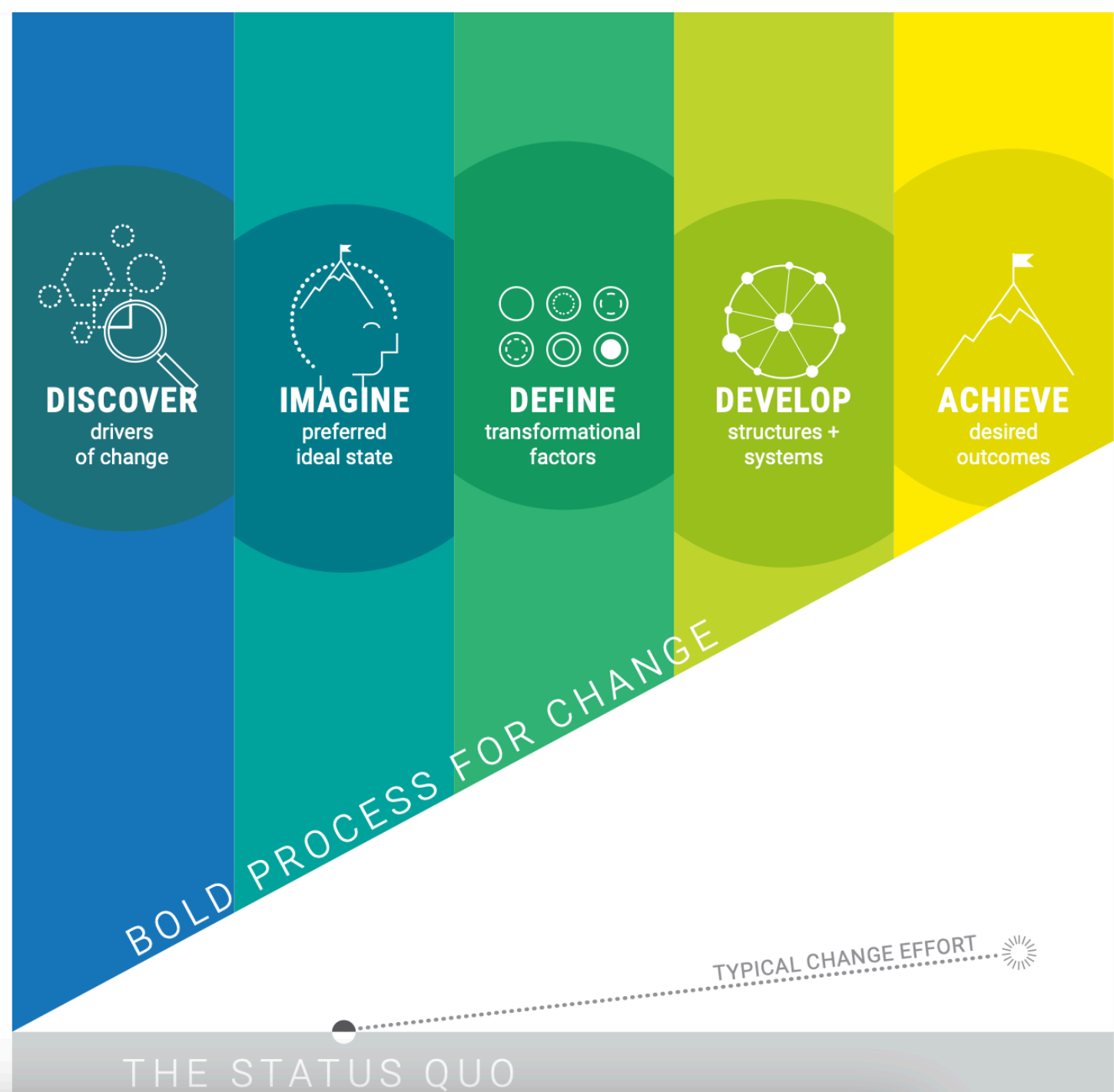
## What is BOLD?

BOLD is a robust consultation process grounded in decades of successful change efforts. Our role is to help schools holistically respond to changes in the world that impact the overall learning experience for every learner. Our systems-based approach addresses teaching and learning while leveraging collaborative learning environments to increase confidence and engagement of educators and learners.



# What does the BOLD process look like?

The BOLD process is designed to lead you through a series of explorations that discover, imagine, define, develop, and achieve the path to your desired outcomes. Within this framework, BOLD's specific services are custom-selected to meet the unique needs of your district or school. These might include strategic planning, process consulting, spatial affordance training, change leadership coaching, culture development, inquiry-based learning implementation, teaching and learning consulting services, or others.



## results

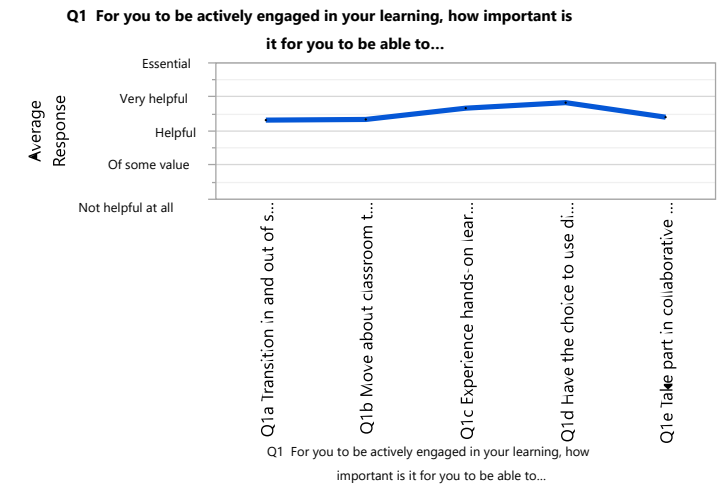


Using a Post Occupancy Evaluation surveys measuring how the design of the built environment impacts student academic engagement from both the students' and teachers' perspectives. The research effort for DLR Group's K12 Education Studio has been led by me since 2016. Some excerpts are shared here. The source is in a new publication published this year. Each effort follows strict scientific, academic protocols.

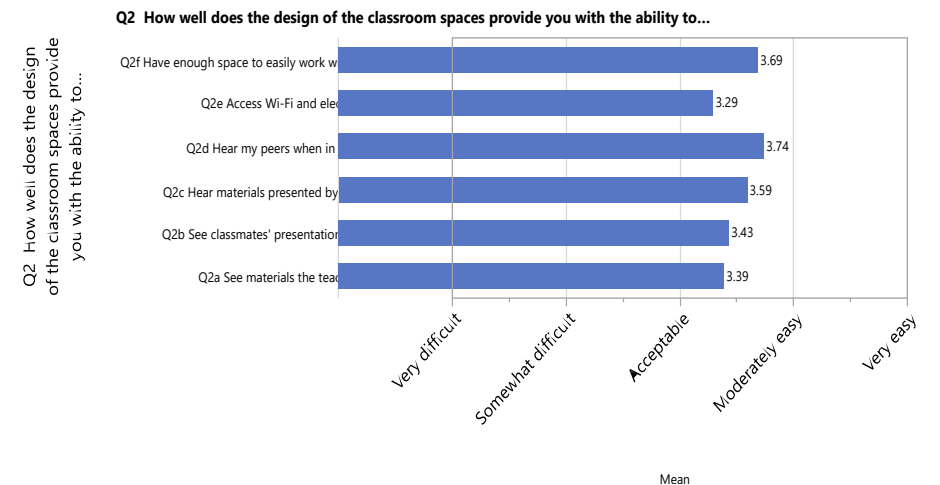
**SOURCE:** Is Higher Education Ready for the Transformed Learner Coming from 9-12? A Case Study. (2021). In (Eds) Kayoko Enomoto, Richard Warner and Claus Nygaard's *Teaching and Learning Innovations in Higher Education*. ISBN: 9781911450733. Libri Publishing Ltd. pp. 47-82.

results /  
excerpts

**Figure 12.** Q.1. For you to be actively engaged in your learning, how important is it for you to be able to...



**Figure 13.** Q.2. How well does the design of the classroom spaces provide you with the ability to...



results /  
excerpts

Figure 14. Q.3. How much impact does the design of the classroom have on your ...

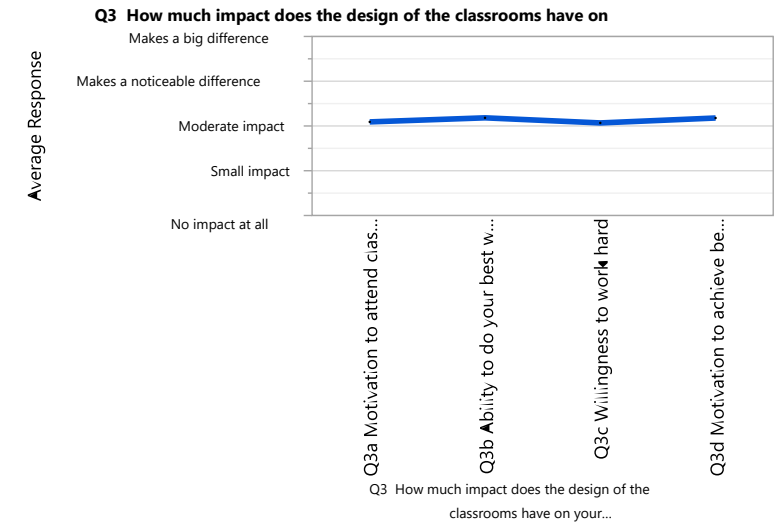
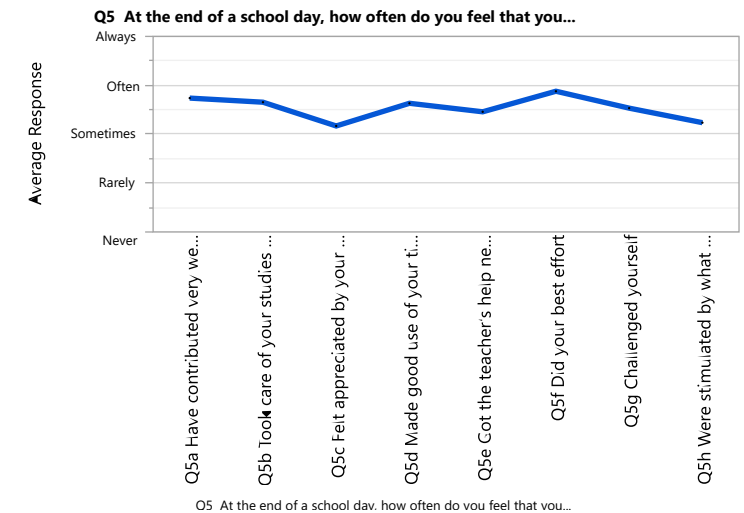
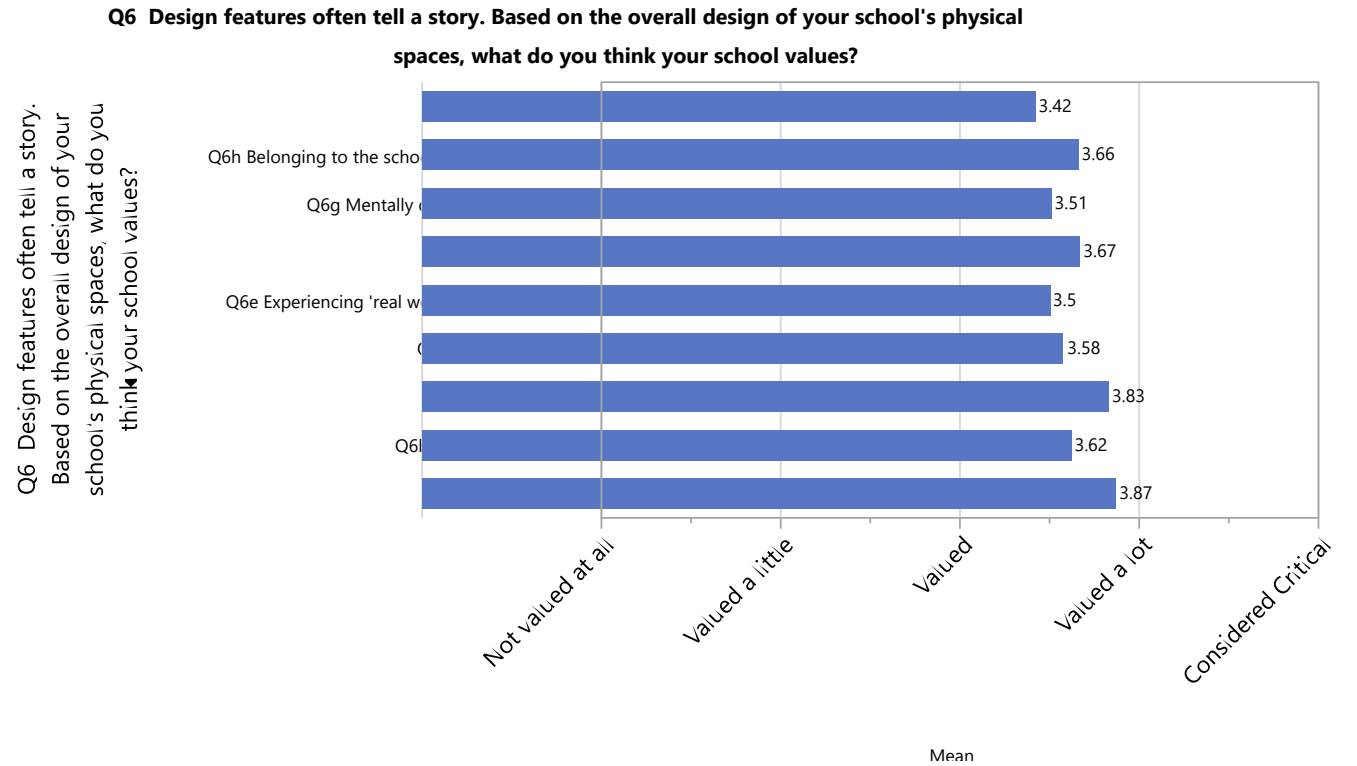


Figure 17. Q.5. At the end of a school day, how often do you feel that you...



# results / excerpts

**Figure 18.** Q.7. How much impact does the design of the building's physical spaces have on your...





It is one thing to develop superior spaces that enable educators to prepare students for the 21st century. We reached a whole new level when DLR Group facilitated our staff to allow space to support learning approaches. Through DLR Group's superior facility activation training, our staff grew into the mission and acquired the necessary mindset and skills to use the building environments as designed. There is total alignment between the intent of the building design and instructional delivery to support teaching and learning. ”

– Mary Kay Utecht, Board President, Agua Fria Union High School District

“ You can build a school, but without that intentional planning of how you want to use that space and how you want to intentionally be innovative, then it's not going to happen. For me, the practices, the talk about learner and teacher practices, this makes it very real. You're putting it in writing. ”

– Lyn Reid, Assistant Principal, Canyon View High School



# A4LE ASSOCIATION DAYS 2021

THANK YOU!

## DIGITAL CONFERENCE



## contacts



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