Mesa County Valley 51 School District
Learning Landscapes

MASTER PLAN
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Introduction

Schoolyards provide an opportunity for the built environment to promote increased physical activity for children and the surrounding community. In addition, studies show that well-planned and equipped schoolyards increase physical activity while also enhancing the learning environment resulting in improved achievement. Such play areas provide physical and mental challenges that translate to improved health and learning attention. Furthermore, with proper design, these areas themselves become outdoor classrooms or learning landscapes and fulfill, a secondary goal for many schools to become a positive focal point of the neighborhood, a place to gather and to meet, a place to enjoy, and a place that enhances the community’s appearance.

Improving schoolyards is a proactive way to benefit health at the community level. The surge in childhood obesity, in recent years, threatens the future health of Colorado. According to the Colorado Health Report Card, published by the Colorado Health Foundation, “Colorado ranks 23rd among the states in the category of childhood obesity, dropping in rank from 3rd to 23rd in just four years.” The current ranking signals a rapid increase in the prevalence of childhood obesity that negatively impacts the overall health and well-being of Colorado’s children. Preventing and combating the childhood obesity epidemic will require a multi-faceted approach. “It means changing behaviors around food intake, physical activity and our residential community. It means addressing the environment in schools and rethinking our culture to emphasize good health,” says James O. Hill Professor of Pediatrics and Medicine at the University Of Colorado School Of Medicine.

![Graph showing the percentage of overweight or obese children in the United States and Colorado from 2003 to 2007.](image-url)
In October 2011, three of Mesa 51’s elementary schools were awarded an Active Play Areas planning grant from the Colorado Health Foundation. The Colorado Health Foundation believes that if kids are a part of a “healthy school” including, but not limited to access to physical activity and healthy foods, they will be more likely to learn better and maintain a healthy lifestyle throughout life. In addition, The Foundation upholds that thoughtful design of a new or renovated activity space at the children’s school can promote greater levels of moderate or vigorous physical activity and decrease sedentary activity.

The Active Play Areas planning grant provided an opportunity for the school district to partner with Learning Landscapes at the University of Colorado Denver to develop active play area master plans for Mesa Elementary Schools.

The Learning Landscapes program within the Colorado Center for Community Development at the College of Architecture and Planning seeks to strengthen elementary schools and their surrounding neighborhoods by designing playgrounds to promote physical activity and social interaction. With over ninety schoolyard renovations complete, the success of this program is founded on a mutual respect of aesthetic, maintainability, safety, and recreational issues.

Colorado Health Foundation

The Foundation seeks to fund active play spaces for schools designed to promote play and other forms of physical activity. This includes field/ground designs or markings that facilitate games and other forms of movement.

Vision:
Colorado will become the healthiest state in the nation.

Mission:
To improve the health and health care of Coloradans by increasing access to quality health care and encouraging healthy lifestyle choices.

To support the goal of Healthy Schools and Healthy Communities, the Foundation seeks to fund active play spaces for schools designed to promote play and other forms of physical activity. This includes inviting playgrounds with active play areas to facilitate games and other forms of movement.

The Active Play Areas Plan supports the Foundation’s following funding strategies:

1. Develop healthy schools -- Expand the number of public schools and preschools that provide health care services, have health and nutrition education, physical education, healthy food in cafeterias and vending machines, and opportunities for physical activity.
2. Promote healthy communities -- Expand access to healthy and affordable foods; provide safe options for physical activity; teach individuals how to manage their chronic disease; and engage parents in raising healthy kids.

Implementation of the Active Play Areas Master Plan can be measured by the Foundation’s following measurable results:

a) Increase the number of children and adults who engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity.
b) Increase the number of children and adults who eat adequate amounts of fruits and vegetables daily.
c) Increase the number of under-served Coloradans who have convenient access to recreational exercise and fruits and vegetables.
Out of 184 districts, District 51 is the twelfth largest school district in the state. Mesa County Valley School District 51 is a K-12 district with 25 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, 4 high schools, 2 preschools and seven other institutions of varying grade levels. District enrollment for the 2010-2011 school year was 22,203 students. District 51 employs 2,935 people consisting of 1,645 teachers and staff, and 1,290 support personnel.

District 51 is a diverse school district representative of many cultures. The largest racial demographic groups are White (73%) and Hispanic (21%), with additional representation from Asian, Black, American Indian and mixed-race students.

Total Enrollment: 22,203
1.49% American Indian/Alaskan Native
0.88% Asian
0.81% Black
20.94% Hispanic
73.21% White
0.14% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
2.53% Two or more

Wellness
Mesa County Valley School District 51 adopted a Wellness Policy in June of 2006 to support a school environment that enhances learning and development of lifelong wellness practices. According to the district’s wellness policy, “The Board believes that the link between nutrition, physical activity, and learning is well documented. Healthy eating and activity patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and lifelong health and well-being.”

The Active Play Areas Master Plans support Goals #1 and #3 of the district’s Wellness Policy by providing age-appropriate areas for students and community to engage in physical activity.

Goal #1: The District will provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors.

Goal #3: The District will provide opportunities for students to engage in physical activity during the school day.

The health and wellness of the greater community was documented in a recent publication by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. According to this report, Mesa County ranks 30th in health outcomes and 32nd in health factors out of 57 counties ranked in Colorado. Health outcomes measures life expectancy, while health factors are based on health behaviors, social and economic factors, and the physical environment.
Existing Challenges
In March of 2010, Clifton Elementary became the only school on the Western Slope to be awarded a “Turnaround Grant” which designates federal dollars to help low-scoring schools pay for extra educational benefits. Clifton received this grant after scoring in the bottom 5 percent for scholastic performance statewide. Over the three years following approval of the grant, Clifton was awarded $2.6 million which the school has allotted toward extra training programs for teachers and educational specialists to bring the school’s performance back up to state standards. The school’s principal, Michelle Mansheim, has decided to focus on improving math scores in the first year, reading and writing skills in the second year, and maintaining new programs in the third year.

Since receiving grant monies, Clifton’s students have shown a 68% growth rate in C-SAP scores compared to the state average of 50%. Thanks to the Turnaround Grant, the school’s students, faculty and staff are looking forward to a bright future. (www.nbc11news.com/home/headlines/Turnaround_school_Clifton_Elementary_offers_progress_report.html?storySection=story)

Intent of the Play Areas Master Plan
The master plan is intended to serve as a roadmap for proactively developing strategies and tactics needed to develop a sound, safe and active play area that has been proven to increase activity for students and surrounding community members. The purpose of the master plan is for Clifton Elementary to be strategically poised to capture opportunities to improve and expand play areas as funding become available. The master plan is intended as a tool for the staff, parents, and district administration to seek funding for future schoolyard renovations and wellness initiatives.

A master plan is a written report and plan that sets forth the structure for future campus improvements. Each school has a vision that speaks to the desires of the school and surrounding community. The vision is further delineated into goals that identify the major components for implementation. These goals are defined through the use of text and imagery. A programmatic list of uses is also developed. Lastly, the master plan sets forth the aesthetic ordering system suggested for use during the design phase to organize the programmatic uses. This plan will provide a framework for fund raising and future construction.

Planning Process
The Master Plan process took place from November 2011 to January 2012 and involved input at both the district level as well as the individual school level. At the district level the collaborative process was guided by the Wellness Coordinator and school faculty and staff. Learning Landscapes staff consulted with the district team members to ensure the individual school master plans aligned with the existing facility master plan, and the over all vision for the District. The team also discussed strategies for phasing, sustainable maintenance and funding for implementation.
The planning process consisted of the following tasks:

- Design team meetings
- Site inventory and analysis
- Play equipment assessment
- Schoolyard use assessment
- Community engagement
- Photo surveys and student drawings
- Master Plan recommendations
- Cost Estimates and prioritization
**Recommendations**

Improved play facilities will serve multiple purposes in not only engaging Mesa County Valley School District students, but the entire community. The following are recommendations for implementation of the Active Play Areas Master Plan at Clifton Elementary School.

- **Install New Age-Appropriate Play Equipment**
  - To increase physical activity for all ages and to provide a variety of safe, challenging activities for all students.

- **Install a Running Path**
  - To provide opportunities for students, teachers, staff and community to be active and encourage each other to get moving.

- **Install Climbing Structures**
  - To increase upper body strength and coordination, and to enliven the existing active spaces.

- **Improve ADA Accessibility**
  - Each play area should be accessible to all the students in the school. It is important for all students and community members regardless of mobility, to be able to interact and be active with one another.

- **Provide More Hard Surface Games with Educational Elements**
  - Input from the design committee and student surveys suggested adding more color on the schoolyard. Students are excited by the color which sparks their creativity during play.

- **Incorporate a Vegetable Garden**
  - Involving a garden in the learning curriculum can promote healthy eating, community stewardship, educational opportunities, and food literacy.

- **Develop Outdoor Learning Environments**
  - Incorporate educational charts, graphics, and graphics within the schoolyard to promote continuous learning even during recess activities.

- **Develop Community Gathering Spaces**
  - Welcoming the neighborhood to gather, play, and exercise in the play areas will help build support stewardship of the community by providing a safe place to be active not just during recess but also after school and on weekends.

- **Increase Opportunities for Shade**
  - To protect students and visitors from the intense Colorado sun and to
Learning Landscape History
The first Learning Landscape was built at Bromwell elementary school in 1998 as a result of a six-year collaboration of parents, elementary students, staff, faculty, neighbors, local businesses and University of Colorado Denver (UCD) landscape architecture graduate students. The vast expanse of asphalt and pea gravel on the Bromwell playground resembled a prison yard, not an environment encouraging activity and child development. Bromwell parents and community members took action to transform the schoolyard into an active and aesthetically pleasing place for learning and physical activity.

Bromwell’s schoolyard renovation project coincided with the end of mandatory busing at Denver Public Schools (DPS). Cessation of mandatory busing meant a renewed interest in Denver neighborhood schools and soon the Bromwell Learning Landscape project evolved into a citywide urban initiative evoking social change and physical transformation of public grounds.

UCD encourages faculty to connect the campus to the community. Landscape Architecture Professor, Lois Brink’s Learning Landscapes course proved a tremendous opportunity for civic engagement. Through Learning Landscapes, UCD graduate students are able to stretch the boundaries of landscape design, engage the community and gain real-world design experience. In 1999 (UCD) College of Architecture and Planning entered into a formal agreement to plan, design, and help build Learning Landscapes at DPS elementary schools throughout the district. The partnership between UCD and DPS has resulted in the transformation of 81 neglected public elementary schoolyards into Learning Landscape Playgrounds.

In 2008 Denver voters expressed satisfaction with the program by passing a multi-million dollar bond initiative to fund the redevelopment of every DPS elementary schoolyard into a learning landscape by 2013.

What We Do:
With a budget of approximately $450,000 per playground, Learning Landscapes leads UCD students, elementary schools and community members in the redesign of schoolyards into fun multi-use parks designed to reflect the culture of the surrounding community. The Learning Landscapes project helps reconnect communities with neighborhood schools. The graduate students get meaningful, hands-on experience working with the community to create master plans and designs for a Learning Landscapes schoolyard.

How We Do It:
By listening and actively involving the school community throughout the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of the Learning Landscape schoolyard. Each school is asked to form a Learning Landscape team to help inform design and programming decisions as well as keep a watchful eye for vandalism and maintenance issues after construction is complete. The Learning Landscapes team recruits students, parents and surrounding community help to build, maintain and improve the Learning Landscape. Each new learning landscapes has a volunteer build day where the school and community volunteers develop a sense of ownership and civic pride by creating outdoor artwork planting gardens, laying sod or building play equipment.

We document and distribute site-specific resources for educators and community members on the outdoor educational elements unique to each Learning Landscape schoolyard. Promoting the programmatic use of the Learning Landscape is critical for the long-term viability and sustainability of these projects.

Community Involvement
Inevitably each site is used by the community when the schools are not in session. As such we feel it is important to work with community leaders to get feedback on the communities needs and desires to determine how the communities use the site and what other organizations help maintain the site - like the Parks and Recreation, softball leagues, soccer leagues, gardening clubs, etc.
A **Learning Landscape** is a multi-use park for outdoor learning, discovery, creativity and play that celebrates the unique character of the *school and community*.

**Learning Landscapes** are comprised of grass playing fields, age-appropriate play equipment, trees, shade structures, gateways, artwork, outdoor classrooms, gardens, traditional play elements and non-traditional play elements.

**Learning Landscapes** function as local public parks providing much needed open space and social gathering places while fostering neighborhood pride for local communities.

**Educational Elements** tend to be focused on the unique curriculum of each school. Educational elements also tend to be derived from the schools theme, mascot, motto, etc. These components come in the form of games that are super imposed on the hard court surfaces or words, poems, mathematical formulas etc. These educational elements can be tied to the school’s curriculum whereby school teachers can use these elements by bringing their classrooms outside. Or the learning components can simply be whimsical things that all the kids do to use their imaginations while playing hopscotch, tetherball, or any activity.
Section Two

- School Background
- Existing Conditions
- Playground Assessment
The total site is approximately 7 acres, with Us Highway 6 at the southern boundary of the site, Prince Ditch Drive to the north, Douglas Ave. to the east, and Olga and Holland St. to the West. The school mascot is the stars and their school colors are gold and blue. As of spring 2010, the enrollment was 442 students and the maximum building capacity 551 students.

Neighborhood Context
The neighborhood around Clifton Elementary is comprised of single-family detached housing on small neighborhood streets. The neighborhood is bordered to the south and east by open agricultural lands and commercial to the west. The school provides the one playground and only open-space area in the neighborhood.

School Motto
“STARS: Self-Responsibility, Teamwork, Attitude, Respect, and Safety” (clifton.mesa.k12.co.us)

School Vision
“We will operate in a nurturing culture where all students are engaged in a rigorous and relevant curriculum and where all students are successfully learning.” (clifton.mesa.k12.co.us)

School Demographics
Spring 2010 Enrollment: 442 students
Male Students: 241
Female Students: 201
Free/Reduced Lunch: 81.5% of students

Racial Make-up of Students:
White: 66.83%
Hispanic: 29.63%
Other: 3.54%

Grade Distribution of Students:
PK: 48
Kindergarten: 68
1st grade: 96
2nd grade: 57
3rd grade: 53
4th grade: 74
5th grade: 46

School District 51 - Elementary School Attendance Boundaries
Map Legend
0 1 2 3 4 0.5
Published: March 5, 2009
Cell Boundaries
Elementary School Location
Wingate
Tope
Thunder Mountain
Taylor
Shelledy
Rocky Mtn
Rim Rock
Pomona
Orchard Ave
Mesa View
Loma
Clifton
Chipeta
Appleton
School Background
Location and History
Clifton Elementary School is located at 3276 F. Road in a residential area of Clifton, north east of Grand Junction. The town of Clifton was named for its proximity to the Book cliffs, a series of mountains and cliffs on the southern and western edge of the Tavaputs Plateau. The Clifton School, constructed in 1937 on the location of the present Clifton Elementary School was then used as a combined junior high and elementary school. These early years of growth in the Clifton community were fueled by the strong agricultural base of the community. There were 10,000 acres in fruit trees in the first decades of the century, with Cross Orchards located at 3079 F Road the largest operation in that area.

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Presented by:
2012 University of Colorado at Denver
Surrounding Area Demographics

As of the Census conducted in 2010 there were approximately 19,889 people living in the town of Clifton. Of the 7,715 housing units, 72.7% are resident-owned compared to the 27.3% rented. According to the 2005-2009 American Community Survey estimate, the median annual household income for residents was $42,378, and the total percent of individuals in poverty (all ages) was 15.7%.

Catchment Area

Clifton Elementary draws students from a 13.43 square-mile geographical area. The attendance boundaries are west to 32 Road and northwest to I-70, and the foothills to the north, D1/2 road to the south, 33rd to the southeast, and the intersection of 33rd and E1/4 running east to 33 ¾.

Site Inventory

Existing Conditions:

Equipment & Materials

The Clifton Elementary playground is located on the north, east, and west sides of the school. It is comprised of a large open grass area, surrounded by a track, with a single backstop to the north; two asphalt play areas with four-square, basketball, and hopscotch games, and two large play pits covered with a loose layer of pea gravel. The gravel area to the west, located next to the basketball court, has traditional play equipment, climbing structures, and swings. The second, located next to the basketball and tetherball courts contains traditional play structures, bars, rings, swings, and slides. Third, the ECE play area located Northwest of the Clifton; bordered on the east by the track and the west by the residential neighborhood.

ADA Accessibility

A majority of the building entrances are ADA accessible. None of the fourteen play structures on the site are ADA accessible since the primary play pits are filled with non ADA-compliant gravel and do not offering a ramp, transfer station, or ground-level activities.
Existing Conditions

Drainage
In general the site drains away from the school to the north and east. Major pooling areas were observed within the main gravel play pit to the east, adjacent lawn areas to the north and within the asphalt area directly west of the school. Poor drainage can lead to ice build-up during winter months and create a slipping hazard for all users.

Circulation and Site Accessibility
Clifton has one primary entrance into the school off of F road. The school ground has pedestrian access points for students and parents at the south crosswalk, southeast bus drop-off zone, and southwest parking lot of the property. Recess is accessed from individual classrooms out one of the eight major entrance/ exits.

The school district provides bus services to and from Clifton. The student drop-off/pick-up area is a single lane located in the southwest parking lot adjacent to the main school entrance. The bus drop-off/pick-up zone is located on the southeast portion of the property. Deliveries and service vehicles are accommodated within the parking lot and through the west service entrance located in the surround neighborhood.

Parking
Clifton has two designated parking lots; one primary lot is located on the southwest corner of the site that holds 80 vehicles with an additional four handicap spots. This lot is relatively small but seems adequate for faculty and staff. Additional secondary parking is available in the bus drop off loop holding 18 vehicles.

Maintenance
The entire schoolyard is equipped with an irrigation system, the grass fields and existing trees and shrubs are well maintained.

Play area surfacing poses a maintenance issue as the gravel from the play pit spills onto adjacent walkways and also allows weeds to grow. Some of the asphalt areas are cracked and in need of resurfacing. Snow removal and storage is a minor maintenance issue during winter months.

Existing Landscape Conditions
Clifton's grass field is maintained by the Mesa School District maintenance department. The grass is in relatively good condition but has been invaded by weeds in some areas and has areas of deterioration due to poor drainage. The school grounds only have a few mature trees in the front area providing shade and aesthetic value. All of the mature trees and landscaping are located in the front of the building along F road.

Playground Assessment
The playground at Clifton Elementary is located to the north, east, and west of the school building and is comprised of six main areas. These include a large grass area with a track, two asphalt play areas (with four-square, small scooter track, hopscotch, and basketball courts) and large play areas incorporating play structures with gravel surfacing.

Safety
Issues of safety were addressed by the design team during the meetings:
- The asphalt play area(s) have significant drainage issues that could create a slipping hazard, especially during cold months.
- Existing metal play structures could heat up during hot days.
- Loose gravel in the play area can be thrown and cause bodily injury or property damage.
- Gravel spills out on asphalt walkways around play area and could cause slipping and falling hazard.
- Lack of age-appropriate play equipment.
- Some asphalt areas are cracked and in need of repair to prevent tripping.

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Playground Assessment
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The first play area is a large grass field measuring 58,768 square feet (1.35 acres) north of the building. This area has a backstop, bench, and light used by all intermediate grades during recess. This field is also used during P.E. class for running and other games and physical fitness activities. The fields are in relatively good condition and are well-used by students and the surrounding community.

The second play area, located to the east is an asphalt court measuring 5,088 square foot surrounded by gravel. This first area is painted with six basketball courts and is used during P.E. class and recess. The asphalt is in fair condition with some minor surface cracks, some wearing paint and a few areas that collect water during rain. The gravel from the surrounding area and the play pit create a slipping/tripping safety issue. Located to the east of these courts is a bank of swings.

The third play area is a large gravel area measuring 5,795 square feet. This area is delineated by a concrete curb and sits adjacent to the east side of the school building. It is the area with maximum use by students. This area is comprised of some traditional play structures including rings, bars, slides, and climbing equipment. This area lacks adequate play features for the amount of space available. Many of the structures are outdated metal climbers. None of the structures are ADA accessible. The entire gravel area suffers from poor drainage, with major pooling areas located outside of the curbing. None of the play structures currently have signage to indicate the appropriate age groups for use. Overall the play areas do not contain adequate age-appropriate activities, or enough features catered towards special needs students.

The fourth play area is an asphalt pad on the southeast side of the school building. This 8,613 square foot area contains no basketball courts, four-square courts, or circular game court. This area is mainly used by younger students to play flag football. The asphalt is in good condition but has some surface cracks and several low points in the southeast and southwest corner where water collects during rain.

The fifth play area, located to the west is an asphalt court measuring 8,670 square foot surrounded by a curb to the west, and tying into the existing grade to the east. This area is painted with two basketball courts, two four-corner courts, scooter track, and numerous painted features. The asphalt is in fair condition with some minor surface cracks, some wearing paint and a few areas that collect water during rain. The gravel from the surrounding area and the play pit create a slipping/tripping safety issue.

The sixth play area is a large gravel area measuring 12,210 square feet. This area is delineated by a concrete curb and sits adjacent to the west side of the school building. It is the area with maximum use by younger students. This area is comprised of some traditional play structures including swings, rings, bars, slides, and climbing equipment. This area lacks adequate play features for the amount of space available. Many of the structures are outdated metal climbers. None of the structures are ADA accessible. The entire gravel area suffers from poor drainage, with major pooling areas located outside of the curbing. Overall the play areas do not contain adequate age-appropriate activities, or enough features catered towards special needs students.
Existing Conditions

**EXISTING CONDITIONS PLAN**

**CLIFTON ELEMENTARY**

**CLIFTON ELEMENTARY CONDITIONS PLAN**

**Holland Street**

**Dennis Avenue**

**Clifton Elementary**

**Key**

- **T**: Trees
- **Parking Area**
- **Softscape**
- **Hardscape**
- **Basketball Courts**
- **Asphalt Area**
- **Play Structure**
- **Gravel Area**
- **Swings**
- **Sculpture**
- **Spiral Slide**
- **Art Mural**
- **Play Fields**
- **Basketball**
- **Sculpture**
- **Field**
- **Play Area**
- **Garden**
- **Shade Structure**
- **Swing**
- **Arched Monkey Bars**
- **Fire Pole**
- **Trash Area**
- **Asphalt Court**
- **Parking Lot(s)**
- **Grass Field(s)**
- **Buildings**
- **Softscape**
- **Hardscape**

**PLAY AREA ENLARGEMENTS**

- **Spiral Slide**
- **Shade Structure**
- **Grass Field**
- **Basketball Court**
- **Swing**
- **Play Area**

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The condition and play structures are needed. The loose gravel surface is not ADA-compliant and has the potential to spill onto adjacent walkways and streets. There is also a general lack of age-appropriate play structures for younger children.
Section Three

- Design Advisory Team
- Vision, Goals, Wish List
- Ordering System
- Master Plan
The Clifton Elementary Design Advisory Committee played an integral role in the active play areas planning process. The committee, comprised of the principal, staff, parents, and community members, provided valuable input regarding needs and desires of the Clifton schoolyard.

Advisory Team Process

The design committee gathered input from Clifton students through the administration of photo surveys. Learning Landscape staff synthesized the information provided by the committee to develop drafts of the schoolyard master plan and the design advisory committee provided feedback on iterations of the plan. This collaborative effort allowed the school to develop an active play areas master plan to reflect the history, culture and curriculum unique to Clifton Elementary School.

Constituent Concerns, Needs, and Desires

Issues:
- Lack of age appropriate play equipment for primary and Pre-K age groups.
- The play equipment is outdated and uninviting.
- There is no shade on any of the playgrounds.
- Gravel from the playground travels onto the asphalt and the sidewalks creating safety issues.
- Paved area gets very hot in warm months.
- PE classes need more outdoor space, and equipment, due to small gymnasium and field size.

Needs:
- Accessible safety surface in play area.
- A shade structure or additional trees to provide shade for students and teachers during recess and PE classes.
- Promote healthy eating and active living at school.
- Create more variety of activities spread throughout the large playground area.
- Address drainage issues in play area and adjacent turf.
- More areas utilizing turf for student activities.

Desires:
- Incorporate health and wellness and general educational elements on playground.
- Create a safe, positive, and inviting environment for students.
- Incorporate vegetable garden into science curriculum to spark curiosity and promote healthy eating at school.
- Incorporate community usage with local organized sports leagues.
- Develop the playground to improve school's self-image and provide a positive asset to the community.
- Update play equipment to increase visual interest and promote healthy activity.

Defining the School’s Vision

Over the course of several meetings with the design team and teachers, the Learning Landscapes staff helped the school formulate the following vision and list of goals based on the school’s desires and needs.

Vision:
“Clifton Elementary will create a safe, colorful and inviting play area to become a valuable amenity for the school and its surrounding community.”

Goals:
- Create an inviting, colorful, and safe environment for students and the surrounding community.
- Increase physical activity and outdoor learning.
- Offer a variety of play equipment that is appropriate for all age groups.
- Create a fully ADA accessible playground.
- Increase the amount of shade and gathering spaces to encourage positive social activity.
- Beautify the schoolyard and highlight school spirit by incorporating the school mascot, school colors, student art, and other elements that students can be proud of.
Wish List:
- Promote individual activities or activities for smaller groups
- Incorporate fitness station equipment or circuit training to increase full body strength
- Age-appropriate equipment for Primary students
- Age-appropriate equipment for Intermediate students
- Updated play equipment with climbing walls, slides, and swings
- Educational paving elements (maps and school colors!)
- Engineered wood fiber (EWF) safety surfacing
- Incorporate mathematic theme; kids love math
- More trees
- Integration of community garden into science curriculum
- Adequate seating and quiet areas for students
- Shade structure
- Outdoor class room

Student Wish List:

The “Wordle” below represents elements students would like to see in their playground based off drawings of their dream playground. The bigger the word, the more frequent the element was represented in the students drawings.
Ordering System

Ordering systems are a unique way of organizing the site in a sort of abstract way. We look at unique influences of each school and neighborhood for inspiration. As such, the ordering systems tend to become an abstraction that unifies a number of different influences and can act as a philosophical mantra of sorts. In some cases the ordering systems might be interpreted literally; in other cases they remain a thematic device. Either way, the ordering systems are an important part of a Learning Landscape and can offer the whimsy and inspiration that these sites and their users desire by keeping ideas fresh and fun.

Clifton’s ordering System

The Clifton ordering system is inspired by the school’s mascot, a star, and by the idea of the school’s motto: Self-Responsibility, Teamwork, Attitude, Respect, and Safety. Concepts to support this ordering system could include images of stars, diagrams and artwork showing constellations. In addition, thematic artwork and designs can be used to spark students’ interest in astronomy and space exploration.
PREFERRED LANDSCAPE PLAN
CLIFTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Key:
- Asphalt/Concrete
- Proposed Grass
- Proposed Vegetated Swale
- Garden Area
- Grand Area
- Parking Area
- Shade Structure
- Community Gateway
- Proposed Trees
- Existing Trees

Community Gateways
Outdoor Classrooms
Shade Structures
Design Element Imagery

2012 University of Colorado at Denver
Clifton Active Play Areas Master Plan Description

Clifton’s design team came up with innovative ways to show school spirit and improve learning. The Clifton Active Play Areas Master Plan was developed based on the needs and desires of the school. The school currently maintains a good relationship with the community and would like to further that relationship by hosting community events near play areas with shaded seating areas. The school mascot, the star, is very important to Clifton’s identity. The design team would like to incorporate this icon themed in blue and yellow as much as possible. Described below are the proposed changes to the Clifton schoolyard in an effort to fulfill the vision and goals developed by the design team.

1. Age-Appropriate Play Equipment
The existing play equipment at Clifton is mostly old and out-dated. This equipment is not appropriately suited to meet the needs of different age groups or students with special needs. The proposed plan maintains the location of the existing play structure areas to keep the cost down, but maximizes the use of each space with areas designated for the needs of different age groups; primary (grades K-2) and intermediate (grades 3-5). The new equipment will not only be safer than the existing structures, but challenge the students to test their coordination, balance, and strength in a colorful and alluring setting.

2. Expanded Asphalt with Games and Activities
Much of the ground surface of the existing schoolyard is cracked asphalt that limits the variety of available activities for recess and PE. Adding more asphalt surface will enlarge the playground with colorful ball courts, games, and educational elements. The expanded play surface will allow for a more even distribution of play activities, and therefore students, throughout the grounds.

3. Shade Trees
The current play area(s) at Clifton lack adequate shade for its warm, sunny climate. There are many mature trees in the front of the school, but there is almost no shade within the existing play areas. Adding new trees will increase shade areas and places for students and the community to cool down on hot days. New trees will also break up the large space of the existing playground with vertical elements and add visual interest with seasonal color change.

4. Outdoor Classroom
An outdoor classroom space was highly desired by the teaching staff at Clifton and will provide additional seating to cool down on hot days, a comfortable vantage point for teachers on recess duty, and provide an outdoor space to promote learning. The design team chose to place the outdoor classroom near the rear of the school to allow for quiet instruction separate from the active play area(s). The new classroom will also provide a gathering area with shade trees and boulders for community meetings and the back-to-school barbeques.

5. Community Garden
The incorporation of a school garden has been proven to improve students’ healthy eating habits and understanding of where food comes from. Adding a community garden to the grounds and Clifton will promote healthy eating habits and bolster a sense of student pride through the cultivation and harvesting of fresh fruits and vegetables.

6. Community Gateway(s)
Community gateways act as an entrance to the school grounds and a landmark to promote a sense of pride and identity for the students, faculty and staff. The gateway at Clifton will be located on the Southwest corner of the building near the primary play area(s), and South of the cafeteria which is a frequently-used access point for students entering the playground after lunch.

7. Recreation/Soccer Fields
The large grass field south of the school is currently underutilized. Re-grading and adding designated areas will allow for the incorporation of regulation-sized soccer/practice fields. This will allow Clifton the opportunity to utilize the space during gym and also host local league games, which will generate revenue for the school district through use fees.

8. Vegetated Educational Swale
A vegetated swale will not only be used for storm water management, but will provide the Clifton Elementary school an interactive opportunity for students to learn about biology, ecology, and the living systems involved.
Section Four

- Cost Estimate
- Resources
- Acknowledgements
### Clifton Elementary - Active Play Areas Master Plan

#### Option III: Estimate of Probable Landscape Costs

This estimate includes the renovation of the primary and intermediate play areas, hard surface repair, games and furnishings in both areas, retrofit track and existing field, implementation of new sod and vegetated swales in intermediate play area, outdoor classroom, garden, and gateway feature.

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Unit Cost</th>
<th>Quantities</th>
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#### Preliminary Cost Estimate

| Site Furnishings, Athletic Equipment and Misc. | | | |
| Picnic Table | EA | $1,000.00 | 0 | $ - |
| Trash Receptacle | EA | $650.00 | 2 | $1,300.00 |
| 6' Bench | EA | $50.00 | 2 | $170.00 |
| Basketball Goal | EA | $1,200.00 | 6 | $7,200.00 |
| Tetherball Poles | EA | $350.00 | 5 | $1,750.00 |
| Permanent or Moveable Soccer Goals | EA | $1,000.00 | 2 | $2,000.00 |
| Backstop with Hood (Dropshot/Funnel) | EA | $1,500.00 | 1 | $1,500.00 |
| Baseball Infield and Bases | EA | $1,500.00 | 0 | $ - |
| **SUBTOTAL** | | | | $15,450.00 |
| Landscape Planting and Irrigation | Shrub Bed Soil Prep | SF | $0.30 | 11,486 | $3,445.80 |
| | Soil and Soil Prep @ field and play areas | SF | $0.55 | 57,348 | $31,541.40 |
| | Irrigation, shrub beds | SF | $0.75 | 11,486 | $8,614.50 |
| | Irrigation, sod areas | SF | $0.55 | 18,622 | $10,242.10 |
| | Irrigation, tree plantings | EA | $60.00 | 12 | $720.00 |
| | Shade Tree, 3" caliper | EA | $400.00 | 3 | $1,200.00 |
| | Deciduous Ornamental Tree, 2.5" caliper | EA | $100.00 | 3 | $300.00 |
| | Boulder field | EA | $150.00 | 12 | $1,800.00 |
| | Shredded Mulch, 4" depth | SF | $1.20 | 0 | $ - |
| **SUBTOTAL** | | | | $60,263.80 |
| Community Vegetable Garden | Soil Amendment | CY | $35.00 | 15 | $525.00 |
| | Concrete mow band, 8"x6" | LF | $11.00 | 100 | $1,100.00 |
| | 4' Chainlink Fence | LF | $20.00 | 100 | $2,000.00 |
| | Chain Link Gate, 4" width | EA | $350.00 | 1 | $350.00 |
| | Irrigation | EA | $1,500.00 | 1 | $1,500.00 |
| | Compost Storage & Accessories | EA | $1,000.00 | 1 | $1,000.00 |
| **SUBTOTAL** | | | | $6,475.00 |

| Project Grand Total | Total | $372,040.95 |
| Project Start Up | Typical construction mobilization | $10,000.00 |
| | Infrastructure | $10,000.00 |
| | Typical infrastructure construction/repair | $10,000.00 |
| Demolition | Typical Demolition | $25,000.00 |
| Architecture Engineering and Coordination | 8% of construction cost | $29,763.28 |
| | 5% of construction cost | $29,763.28 |
| Owner Representative Fees | 5% of construction cost | $18,602.05 |
| | Contingency Cost | 10% of construction cost | $37,204.10 |
| | Project Grand Total | $502,610.35 |
| Additional Features | Poured in Place (Primary Play Area) | SF | $25.00 | 12,545 | $313,625 |
| | Poured in Place (Intermediate Play Area) | SF | $25.00 | 8,100 | $202,500 |
| **Project Grand Total W/ Additions** | | | | $967,122.87 |

Presented by:
Resources
Health at a Crossroads
2010 Supplement to the Colorado Health Report Card – Colorado Health Foundation
Mesa County 51 School District Website (www.mesa.k12.co.us)
Clifton Elementary School Website (clifton.mesa.k12.co.us)
U.S. Census Bureau (www.census.gov)

Acknowledgements
Colorado Health Foundation
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University of Colorado Denver
College of Architecture and Planning
Colorado Center for Community Development
Learning Landscapes
Professor Lois Brink
Executive Director
Cate Townley
Community Outreach Coordinator
Chris Schooler
Senior Research Associate
Graduate Student Interns:
Nathan Bishop
Patrick Healy
Anthony Pozzuoli