SWANSEA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A Master Plan for Elementary School Campus Improvements

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Finding Common Ground
Exploring the Urban Experience
Fall Semester 1999
LA6686:01
University of Colorado - Denver
Swansea Elementary School
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Swansea Elementary School is located just north of I-70 at Columbine St. and East 46th Ave. in the semi-industrial neighborhood of Elyria-Swansea in Northeast Denver. It is a walk-in Bilingual school with curriculum encompassing ECE through grade five. Swansea is one of 86 elementary schools in the Denver Public Schools (DPS) system.

The school service area is wide ranging, with an irregular boundary that stretches from Smith Rd. in the south to 54th St. in the north, and Brighton Blvd. in the west to Yosemite St. in the east.

Student enrollment is currently 713 students, with demographics as follows:

- American Indian: 0.1%
- Asian: 0.1%
- Black: 2.2%
- Hispanic: 94.1%
- White: 3.5%

These demographics roughly mirror the school service area. Approximately 98% of the students come from the service area, with only a small percentage attending the school through the DPS Choice program. Approximately 96% of students have been designated “at risk” and qualify for the free and reduced lunch program. Student attrition/stability rates during the past five years have fluctuated between 82% and 85%. School attendance is for 1998/99 was 93%.

Student Achievement at Swansea is reflected in recent test scores:

Iowa Basic Skills Test (ITBS):
(A score of 50 is the National Average)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1998</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second Grade Reading</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Grade Language</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Grade Math</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fifth Grade Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fifth Grade Language</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Grade Math</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
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Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP):

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Number of Students</th>
<th>% At or Above Proficiency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Third Grade Reading</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fourth Grade Reading</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Grade Reading</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The staff at Swansea are currently involved in several programs designed to address low test scores. These include English Language Acquisition, Reading/Math/Science Resource Learning, Balanced Literacy, Rethinking Excellence and Accelerated Learning.

60% of the students at Swansea Elementary speak Spanish. 50% of those are monolingual Spanish. As a result there is at least one Spanish-only classrooms at every grade level. The English Language Acquisition (ELA) program works to transition these students into English speaking classrooms where sheltered English is emphasized. Oral language development and English as a Second Language (ESL) are emphasized in every classroom.

In addition to ESL, Swansea is also a Title I school, with three Title I specific staff. Other special programs include Art, Music, LMC Learning, Special Education, Reading Recovery, Math/Science Resource Learning, Computer Instruction, Gifted and Talented Challenge and numerous after school programs.

There are 27 classrooms at Swansea, with an average class size of 25 students. Classes are divided into regular (English Speaking), ELE-E (Spanish Speaking Transitional), ELE-S (Spanish Speaking) and Title I. Additional school facilities include a Cafeteria with Kitchen, Gymnasium, Auditorium, Library Media Center, Computer Center and Interior Courtyard.

There are currently 33 full time faculty. There are an additional 21 Paraprofessionals to help support the teaching staff. Additional support personnel include a Nurse, Psychologist, OT/PT, Social Worker, Speech Therapist, Attendance Clerk, Office Staff, Custodial Staff and Lunchroom Staff. Total staff is 87 adults.

**History**

"There’s been a school here forever. It’s part of the fabric of the neighborhood. The people here depend on it. It’s part of their lives."

- Joann Estrada-Mast, Swansea Principal

There has been a school on this location in Denver since the late 19th Century. The original red-brick school house was a 2 1/2 story structure, located at the southern end of the block. In 1957 a detached addition was made on the north end of the block to handle the increasing population. The Ernest’s addition approximately doubled the school’s square footage. In
1975 an attached addition to the Ernest's portion of the school was made which approximately tripled the building's area. The school was designed in the California Classroom format, with exterior access to individual classrooms and quad pod classroom arrangements. It was also at this time when the original red-brick school house was demolished. This unfortunate historic loss was determined necessary to provide adequate space for school grounds. In 1997 an eight classroom addition was made to handle the increasing student population. This increased the square footage by approximately 40% and created an interior courtyard. This addition also included rearrangement of the school grounds, upgrading the coincident playground area and adding a staff parking lot across Elizabeth St.

**Future Improvements**

Swansea school is at capacity with current student population. In response to this, the Board of Education has approved a two classroom addition to provide for additional capacity. The classroom addition is scheduled for the 2001 Bond. An alternate plan will be proposed with this master plan to acquire more teaching space and upgrade existing inadequacies at the school. This in turn would greatly optimize the application of the approved classroom addition. The proposal would convert the existing undersized LMC into two classrooms and then construct a new LMC on the Northeast corner of the block. A project analysis for this proposal is currently being done by the architecture firm Luis O. Acosta Associates (LOA). The space is planned to be multi-use and would correct many of the facility inadequacies currently at the school (see Appendix for proposed program opportunities). Site design, program development and costing analysis for this proposal are ongoing.

**Site Analysis**

"School need to be arenas of love and caring rather than being designed, constructed and administered as prisons." -Anne Taylor

The Swansea Elementary School building and grounds occupy the city block bounded by 46th Ave., Columbine St., 47th Ave. and Elizabeth St. The staff parking lot occupies the northwest corner of the city block bounded by 46th Ave., Elizabeth St., 47th Ave. and Thompson Ct.. Total site area is 4.22 acres. Specific division of land uses is as follows:

**Site Area:**

- Block 1 - (600 ft x 265 ft) = 159,000 ft² (3.65 acres)
- Block 2 - (165 ft x 200 ft) = 25,000 ft² (0.57 acres)

**Total Site Area** - 184,000 ft² (4.22 acres)
Land Use Breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asphalt Parking</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asphalt Play Area</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Walks</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigated Turf</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-irrigated Area</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft-surface Play Area</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The grounds at Swansea appear well maintained. The building is situated at the north end of the site, per DPS requirements. Unfortunately the elevated I-70 viaduct compromises the advantages of southern exposure on the south school area. The grounds immediate to the building on west, north and east sides is irrigated turf with several mature trees, including Honey Locust, Red Oak and Crabapple. There are also several recently planted Red Maple on the west-side tree lawn. There is no vegetation on the south-side play area.

There are 60 parking spaces in the new parking area across Elizabeth St., more than adequate based on the classroom calculation method for determining parking requirements. However there are 87 adults working at Swansea and, without carpooling or public transportation, several are required to park on the surrounding streets. The drop-off-pick-up arrangement for students in the morning and afternoon is extremely awkward and these additional cars on the street further complicate this situation.

The play area is divided into three categories, a playground region, an asphalt region and playing fields. See appendix for detailed Playground Safety Assessment for detailed analysis.

The playground region has one primary play structure with two platforms connected by a bridge, climbing bars and a slide. There is a set of primary travel rings which have been updated with safety restrictions, a metal jungle gym and a double bay of four swings. The equipment appears to be well maintained and in good condition. The entire area is surfaced in squeegee. Squeegee depth was sampled in several locations and averaged approximately 3 inches. This is well below the required 12 inches for safe fall zones. Rubber matting is provided at the base of the play structure slide. This was necessary due to the proximity to the soft-surface, hard-surface transition. The playground’s most glaring problem is one of adequacy, there is just not enough equipment for the 713 students. On the days I observed play, long lines were queued for all equipment. The school has a policy that students using the swings must count to 50 and then get off if there is a waiting line. There is also an issue of age appropriateness. All equipment is at primary scale, designed for children K-2nd grade. In interviews, the older students com-
plained that all the play equipment was too small, while younger students said that older children using the playground intimidated them. Swansea also has an ECE program and no ECE specific equipment, which violates state guidelines.

The asphalt play area has four tetherball poles, four 4-square courts and a basketball court. The equipment appears well maintained and in good condition. The main problem here is proximity and circulation. The asphalt area is immediately proximate to the back of the school and the main entrance to and from the play area. There are conflicts between the students using the equipment for playing and those passing through. The equipment needs to be more sensitively sited to avoid these inevitable conflicts. Also proximity to squeegee areas results in pea gravel squeegee being spread across the hard surface areas. This is reduces the quality of play in the asphalt play area and is a serious accident hazard.

The squeegee playing fields account for more than 50% of the total play area, but are the least used. There are chainlink backstops at three corners that are rarely used except in specific PE applications. There is a set of Volleyball poles that, according to students, is never used. The area is primarily used for impromptu games of Soccer, Marbles and nondescript running games. The squeegee depth was sampled in several locations and averaged approximately 2 inches, required depth for playing fields is not defined. Running along the southern border of the site is the elevated I-70 viaduct. This casts a shadow over approximately 30% of the playing field area. The students call this the “dead zone” due to the cold feeling. Although worthwhile in summer, the shadow causes snow and ice to melt very slowly from this area. Due to limited play space at Swansea, the playing field area seems under used. While the other play areas are very crowded, the playing fields are relatively open. This space could be better programmed to take advantage of precious space and still allow for formalized play activities.
Constituent Groups

“Our idea is to bring the world to the children on their own school grounds.” -Swansea Playground Committee

Numerous constituent groups were sampled when preparing this master plan design. Initial interviews were conducted with the school principal, Joann Estrada-Mast, and her playground steering committee. (see Appendix for details on telephone conversations and meetings). During these sessions the staff asked about limitations of current school grounds and then were encouraged to dream about possibilities for this space. Their comments demonstrated their enthusiasm for this process. Safety and aesthetics were raised as areas of concern. Safety issues were described both for within the site and from proximate uses. Problems with site circulation and use conflict were described. Concerns with student drop-off/pick-up strategies were reviewed. Proximate use concerns included neighborhood loitering and vandalism, the elevated I-70 viaduct, industrial proximity and the Colonial Motel across Elizabeth St.. There was also the issue of school aesthetics. There is concern that the school does not have a positive community image. Limited landscaping and fields of asphalt, dirt and pea gravel may be sending the wrong message about the potential opportunities available at Swansea. Improvement suggestions included grass, trees, shade structures, more equipment, improved playing field facilities, discovery trails, ecosystem demonstrations, gardens, and an amphitheater. An initial design was prepared based on this input and presented to the committee. This was followed by iterative brainstorming sessions to revise the design.

Next surveys were distributed to the staff, parents and community representatives to sample their ideas about improvements to the school play area. (see appendix for sample copies) Survey data is still being collected from these groups, however initial results are similar to data collected by the school playground committee, including the concerns with safety and school image. Final results will be compiled and factored into ongoing design development.

Student interviews were conducted with representative classes from grades 1-5. Talking with the students provided the richest input to the design process. Each was asked what they liked and disliked about the current school play area. They were then encouraged to daydream about potential improvement that would make the playground more fun. They were asked their preference between PE and recess and about the things they played at each. Finally they were given free reign to fantasize about changes assuming no limitations. Answers varied greatly, ranging from extremely imaginative to routine. An interesting correlation developed between the student’s age and their ability to daydream. The younger children had no trouble daydreaming elaborate additions
to the playground, but as the children got older, their requests became more traditional. The willingness for 5th grade students to fantasize outrageous additions to their playground was extremely limited.

The youngest group sampled were 1st graders. They were very excited to discuss the outdoor play space at Swansea. For this age child, play and fantasy are the same. As a result, they were also asked to draw pictures to help communicate their ideas.

"I want a trampoline that goes into a pool..." - Carla, 1st Grade

"A river we can swim in would be nice to have..." - Zuleima, 1st Grade

"I want to take care of cows and sheep and horses..." - Eric, 1st Grade

The younger children didn’t change their answers much when encouraged to fantasize. Only after Elitch’s was mentioned did the answers shift toward elaborate amusement rides. As the group got a little older, their responses began to be grounded in more traditional concepts, even outrageous requests were combinations of accepted things.

"I want grass and trees and flowers, and the grass can have sprinklers in it and you can turn them on and we can run through them to stay cool when it’s hot out." - David, 3rd Grade

"Can we have a skating rink with a swimming pool. You could connect them with a tunnel so you could go underground to get to them." - Richard, 3rd Grade

The 3rd grade students were also somewhat confused about the difference between realistic
daydreaming and unrestricted fantasy. Answers again referenced more extreme combinations of already mentioned items. The 4th grade class became even more traditional in their requests. Things like shade and grass and more places to play were common.

“We need grass and trees so that it won’t be so hot when we play...”  - Adrian, 4th Grade

“How about some rocks to climb and a track to run on...”  - Jose, 4th Grade

Even the extreme fantasy was more grounded in reality with requests like a batting cage, restaurants and an aquarium. Finally the 5th graders were difficult to get beyond the traditional responses.

“More basketball courts and put them away from the gravel fields, so there won’t be gravel all over them all the time.”  - Justin, 5th Grade

“We want picnic tables so we have some place outside to sit and talk after lunch.”  - Luke, 5th Grade

Fantasy items for 5th graders included a tire swing, arcade and Burger King restaurant. When reminded that money was no object and that they could even ask for a rollercoaster, most rolled their eyes and laughed. An ice cream stand was as inventive as they were willing to get.

Complaints were very similar across all age groups and reflect aspects already defined in meetings with Swansea staff.

“It’s way too crowded out there. I’m always getting bumped into...”  - Karen, 3rd Grade

“There’s not enough stuff to play with and it’s all for little kids.”  - Rosa, 3rd Grade

“The big kids are always playing on everything, so I can’t play there...”  - Jullian, 1st Grade

“It’s hard to play tetherball with everyone running, they keep breaking up the game.”  - Marquesa, 5th Grade

“The fields are too dirty and hot, when I fall down I get my pants all dirty and I always have rocks in my shoes.”  - 4th Grade Challenge Student

“It stinks out there sometimes, the cars stink and Purina really stinks...”  - 4th Grade Challenge Student

It’s really cold back by where the highway is...”  - 4th Grade Challenge Student

When polled on their preference between recess and PE, most students preferred the
unstructured play of post lunch recess to the formal environment of Physical Education (PE) class. All students interviewed were very enthusiastic about the concept of improvements to the school grounds at Swansea. Even in the older students, who would have graduated to other schools before improvements were completed, remained excited about the possibilities discussed. As one 5th graders put it, “I still live in the neighborhood and can use it after school.” Detailed review of classroom interviews is included in the attached Appendix.

**Goals and Objectives**

"Playgrounds are intended to facilitate children’s cooperative play, sensory play, social interaction, exploration and manipulation of the environment." —Mark Groves and Claire Mason

The purpose of the Master Plan is to define and detail Swansea Elementary School’s vision for their school grounds. That vision is defined by the following goals:

**Reconnect to the Community.** The school and grounds should be a place of civic pride. The school should be a focal point for the community.

**Create opportunities for Participatory Learning.** The school grounds should be an extension of the learning environment, with interactive opportunities in an outdoor setting.

**Improve Recreational Opportunities.** The school grounds should be a great place to play and have fun. Quality, quantity and arrangement of play opportunities are critical for optimizing discovery and fun for a play area.

**Green the School.** Fields of asphalt, dirt and pea gravel create a negative image for the school. By transforming the school grounds with grass, trees and landscaped activities, you create a positive image for the school and the surrounding neighborhood.

**Create Safe Site for learning, discovery and fun.** The school grounds should be a place where children can learn and play without danger or risk.

**Celebrate Cultural and Historical Character of the Neighborhood.** The school grounds should represent the cultural diversity and historic character of the neighborhood.
Master Plan - The Learning Landscape at Swansea

“The opportunity for children to shape their own environment is fundamental to their healthy development and is the only way to ensure them adequate choices to meet their diverse needs.”  - Robin Moore

Reconnect to the Community

The school grounds at Swansea should be more than just for the school. They should be a place of civic pride. The Elyria-Swansea neighborhood is a semi-industrial neighborhood that is primarily middle to lower income families. Demographic evaluations show the area to be approximately 94% Hispanic. Swansea should be a focal point for this community. Improvements in the school grounds should be designed to benefit the community as well as the school since the community will utilize the space after school and on weekends. These grounds could serve as a connection between school and community, whether as a place for children to play or as a gathering place for community activities, they should serve as a reference point for possibilities. Elimination of the Colonial Motel removes a neighborhood eyesore and replaces it with community resources not found nearby. A green, well landscaped school ground will foster civic pride and encourage community involvement at Swansea. Playground equipment improvements will serve neighborhood children and encourage after school occupation of the site and thus reduce vandalism. Irrigated turf playing fields will provide the community with much needed facilities. Learning Landscape program elements, such as the climbing hill, demonstration gardens, geology displays the school historic platform provide the neighborhood with discovery opportunities, which translate into increased enthusiasm for learning and interaction at Swansea. The Community Garden area will provide a concrete connection with members of the neighborhood. The community will be invited to care for and maintain a dynamic piece of Swansea. Through love and hard work, the northeast corner of the Swansea campus will be transformed and the literal fruit of that labor will be food gardeners. A community garden also encourages the community to take responsibility for the school site. Increase site occupation, reduced vandalism and soaring civic pride show all members of the community that they can control their own destiny. The school grounds at Swansea will be the symbol of that success.

Create Opportunities for Participatory Learning

The outdoor environment at Swansea should be an extension of the inside learning environment, but not in a heavy-handed way. The Learning Landscape provides interactive experiences for students to learn, discover and have fun at the same time. Because of the subtle demonstrative qualities of an outdoor setting, many students may discover insight into subjects which they currently struggle with. Reading, Writing, History, Social Studies, Math, Science, Art, Music and Drama all have learning opportunities in the school grounds at Swansea. The raised platform is a central design feature of the Swansea school grounds.
The platform represents the footprint and is located on the site of the original Swansea school house. This can be used to explain history and reference other activities of that time (late 19th Century). But it can also be used as a stage for performing or an area for informal talks and demonstrations. The paving surface will have a regular grid pattern which can be used to demonstrate mathematical concepts. Drawing on the surface with chalk, the students can review math and science concepts or compose art. The raised platform is both educational and recreational. From this elevated position (approximately 3 feet) students can inventory all activities taking place throughout play area, thus allowing them to review and choose the appropriate place for them. There will be large boulders situated about the grounds. Each will be a representative samples of either Igneous, Metamorphic or Sedimentary rock. At 5-7 tons, these boulders will be fun to climb on, but also interesting to learn about. Each classroom will have it’s own garden to experiment with. These classroom gardens will become a unique expression of teacher and students. They will serve as demonstrations for a variety of unique vegetation. Possibilities include xeriscape (low water) plantings, butterfly/hummingbird plantings, perennial flower plantings, culinary herb plantings, medicinal herb plantings and industrial herb plantings. These gardens will and foster a sense of pride and ownership of the school ground. The climbing hill, located on the south end of the site is designed to integrate topography with learning. The three-sided land mass can be used for science demonstrations or as a nondescript mound for sledding and “King-of-the-Mountain” games. The playing fields are open enough to build a scale model of our solar system. The community gardens will display the science of agriculture and the results of hard work. The interior courtyard will be redeveloped as a private school space. The current site has one tree and little personality. The master plan would transform this into a quiet space with naturalized landscaping. The enclosed space will include a recirculating stream and turtle pond. There will be dense tree canopy, a meandering path and seating to reinforce the naturalistic qualities of the space. The learning landscape should provide a welcome change from the classroom and show the students that the school grounds are more than just for recess and PE. Throughout the grounds there will be opportunities to discover and learn, so many that students may discover opportunities unintended from the original design. That would be the ultimate measure of success.

**Improve Recreational Opportunities**

The Swansea school grounds can be a place to learn and discover, but should also be a great place to play and have fun. Play time is critical to healthy development and absolutely necessary in the school environment. As a result, both programmed and unprogrammed play spaces need to be designed minimize risk and allow for safe play. The new playground areas will provide new play structures with optimized play opportunity and age appropriate equipment. No longer will the older children bypass the playground because the equipment is too small for them. To avoid conflicts and insure safety, ECE, primary and intermediate play areas will be separated. They will remain in proximity to one another to allow for adequate supervision. The swings, tetherball poles and 4-square courts will be increased in number and organized in an age appropriate manner, yet sited to avoid use conflict. Open
spaces will be combined with variable topography to provide a variety of undefined active play spaces. For an example, the climbing hill is three-sided land mass designed to maximize playability. Each side offers a different experience with a boulder climb, sloped hill and stepped retaining wall. Structured play areas are critical to a successful play space, especially for older students. Soccer fields, a Baseball field and Basketball courts have been provided for organized play. These resources are available for school and community use and arranged to minimize impact to the less structured play occurring in other parts of the site. The quantity of equipment and play space has been designed to support the current student population and allow for the expected increase. Circulation analysis of the site has resulted in an arrangement of play opportunities that seeks to minimize conflict and optimize fun and discovery.

Green the School

School grounds dominated by fields of asphalt, dirt and pea gravel create a negative image for Swansea. By transforming the school grounds with green grass, trees and landscaped activities, Swansea will recreate it’s image. This will become a place for possibilities, where students and adults can focus on the positive. The natural setting of the learning landscape creates an environment which optimizes learning, discovery and play. Irrigated turf grass areas help to cool the site and provide a pastoral reference in this urban setting. Trees offer shade in the summer and dynamic displays in the spring and fall. Flowers and other plantings provide beauty and opportunities for practical learning. What better way to teach students about respect than by demonstrating the fragile strength of nature as well as their place in it and responsibility for it. Green grass, trees and flowers go a long way toward improving attitudes within the school and community and may encourage involvement. When adults and students see the transformation of the school grounds at Swansea, they may begin to believe that anything is possible.

Create Safe Site for Learning, Discovery and Fun

The school grounds at Swansea ground should be a place where children learn and play without risk or danger. Safety is a concern both within the site and from proximate uses. Circulation and conflict issues within the school grounds have been addressed with age and activity appropriate arrangement of program and equipment. Safety zones are maximized and high activity areas are maintained single-use to minimize unrelated conflict. Student drop-off and pick-up is also a site safety concern at Swansea. Due to the narrow streets and residential use, morning and afternoon distribution of students is often harrowing. The master plan proposed separating school bus and parent drop-off points. The school buses are given a long pull-in along Columbine St. The pull-in has been aligned with trails leading into the school grounds to optimize student distribution and minimize conflicts. The parent drop-off occurs on the opposite side of the school at a turn around loop defined by the Elizabeth St. alignment. This drop-off point allows direct access to the school building or
distribution onto school grounds. An additional safety issue featured on many of the survey results is the concern with the proximity of the Colonial Motel. This motel has been the site of illegal drug activity and the subject of numerous police raids. Some of these raids have occurred during school hours and have compromised the safety of the students and staff at Swansea. As a result, it is the immediate goal of this master plan to acquire the Colonial Motel property and thus eliminate the high risk factor of drug and other illegal activities just across the street. In addition to eliminating this risk to the staff and students at Swansea, once demolished, the property will provide much needed space for the school grounds growth. This is also the 1st step to acquiring the entire block east of Swansea with the eventual goal of developing a two block school campus. This will involve demolishing Elizabeth St. between 46th and 47th Ave. and acquiring the open lot and 5 residential properties remaining on the block. This is a long term goal, but is critical for Swansea to maintain a controlled perimeter and thus insure a safe school environment.

**Celebrate Cultural / Historical Character of the Neighborhood**

The Elyria/Swansea neighborhood has a rich cultural and historic character that should be celebrated on these school grounds. Students should have the opportunity to understand their unique cultural qualities and feel proud of their place in our diverse world. By creating a site that celebrates that character, Swansea School will provide pride and distinction for their students and a vital link to the surrounding community. Ideas include using the school grounds for cultural festivals and celebrations, with the school involved in preparation. A mural can be painted along the base of the platform displaying the unique cultural history of the people of Elyria/Swansea. The platform provides a historic reference for the site. The raised platform represents the footprint and is located on the site of the original Swansea school house. The 2 1/2 story red-brick school house was constructed in the late 19th Century and served the neighborhood for over 100 years. In 1975, the structure was razed to make room for the current school structure. When this structure was demolished, a link to the past was severed and the neighborhood lost a connection. The platform seeks to define an historic reference and thus reestablish a link to community and history.

**Conclusion**

The master plan for the school grounds at Swansea Elementary School seeks a vision for the future. Once developed, this site will provide opportunities for learning, discovery and play for the staff and students as well as the surrounding community. But certain changes in school policy are critical to make the transition to the learning landscape a success.
Formal changes in school curriculum are necessary to insure the use of these grounds as yet another tool in the teacher’s arsenal. An excuse of being too busy is unacceptable and cheats the students out of the unique learning potential of this landscape. Without the curriculum commitment, this is just another pretty school yard which may or may not succeed. There will be no vital link to the community, no opportunity for learning and discovery. The possibilities to reinvigorate this the Swansea School should not be allowed to pass by without a dedicated commitment from staff, students and community, for these are the ones who will benefit the most from suc
Swansea Elementary School Grounds Master Plan
Phased Implementation Plan

- **Phase I** – Redevelop the Playground area immediately behind the School.

- **Phase II** – Redevelop enclosed courtyard as private School Space.

- **Phase III** – Redevelop Squeegee Playing Field between Playground and South Site Border.

- **Phase IV** – Acquire Colonial Motel Property and develop for as School Grounds Annex.

- **Phase V** – Acquire remaining properties on Colonial Motel Block for contiguous School Campus.
Swansea Elementary School Grounds Master Plan Appendix

- Brainstorming Memorandum (7/23/99)
- Master Plan by Tom Roberts (9/9/99)
- Handbook for Public Playground Safety
- DPS Elementary School Attendance Area Map
- Meeting Report – 10/19/99 - Intro meeting, J. Estrada-Mast, L. Brink, R. Yawger
- Playground Safety Site Assessment for Swansea – 11/6/99
- Site Plan showing existing site analysis – 11/6/99
- DPS Goals
- NY Times Article – “Tutored by the Great Outdoors: A Greening of the Asphalt”
- Memo from S. Ouellette detailing DPS Construction Service input to Master Plan Development
- Telephone Conversation Report – 11/30/99 - w/ J. Estrada-Mast
- Swansea Staff Survey Sheet
- Swansea Parent Survey Sheet
- Swansea Community Survey Sheet
- Meeting Report – 12/2/99 - T. Habben (LOA), R. Yawger
- Swansea Elementary School Improvement Plan 1999-2000
- Swansea Membership/Attendance List
- Building Layout
- Swansea School Service Boundaries
- Notes – Program elements for LMC Addition – J. Estrada-Mast, R. Nehls, K. Sylvester
- Notes – Playground Suggestions – B. Mulryan
- Grant Application for “Rethinking Excellence” Project
- Transmittal Memo detailing items provided by DPS Construction Services.
- DPS Facility Inventory for Swansea
- DPS Bond items for Swansea
- CAD layers for Swansea Site, Building Footprint
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