Elevated, Fenced-in Gravel Playing Field (~1 acre)
## Opportunities

Architectural history and character  
- Pure geometrical forms  
- Multi-culturalism of students and surrounding community  
- Grade changes between blacktop and raised field  
- Select elements of 2003 Master Plan - programming, gardens, & theme  
- Grand front lawn and entrance

## Constraints

- Small site  
- Budget  
- 30” concrete pipe draining stormwater from sites to the south  
- Drainage inlet and subsurface system  
- Universal access to raised field  
- Parking Plan  
- Fire and service access  
- Storage/maintenance shed  
- Snow collection

### Key

- Natural Area  
- Irrigated Turf  
- Classroom Gardens  
- Play Areas  
- Hardcourt Games  
- Plazas  
- Outdoor Art  
- Primary Circulation  
- Service/Fire Access

###-scale: 1" = 20'

### Programming & Layout

Valverde Elementary School

- Grand Plaza: Performances & Events  
- Existing Irrigated Turf  
- Naturalized Landscape w/ Boulders  
- Meandering Pathway w/ Learning Elements  
- Seven Summits Plaza: Performance Plaza  
- Early Childhood Education Play Pit  
- Intermediate Play Pit  
- Kinder Classrooms  
- Hardcourt Games  
- Classroom Gardens  
- Informal Courtyard with Seating  
- Recalling Staging Area  
- Gateway Feature  
- Mural & Wall Games  
- Hardcourt Games  
- Existing Staging Area  
- Primary Pedestrian Circulation  
- Snow Collection Area  
- Entry Plaza  
- Existing & Future Parking  
- HVAC  
- Natural Area  
- Irrigated Turf  
- Classroom Gardens  
- Play Areas  
- Hardcourt Games  
- Plazas  
- Outdoor Art  
- Primary Circulation  
- Service/Fire Access
**GREEN VALLEY**
- Valverde means “green valley” in Spanish, Portuguese and Italian.
- Teachers expressed a desire to bring mountain experience into the city.

**ENVIROMENTAL EDUCATION**
- Teachers want to encourage environmental stewardship from students and community members.
- Environmental education provides a broad range of outdoor activities to incorporate into curriculum.

**CULTURAL LITERACY**
- Valverde’s students and community members come from all over the world.
- Teachers would like to celebrate this multi-culturalism.

**CROSS-LANGUAGE CONNECTIONS**
- Valverde’s Literacy Squared teaching method stresses bi-literacy in Spanish and English.
- Native languages of students go beyond just Spanish and English.

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**SEVEN SUMmits**

**THE HIGHEST MOUNTAIN ON EACH OF THE 7 CONTINENTS**

- **Example Rock Inscription**

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**Seven Summits Interpretive Path: Rock Inscriptions**

1. **Everest**
   - Continent: Asia
   - Country: Nepal
   - Languages Spoken: Nepali, Tibetan, Hindi
   - Elevation: 29,035 ft
   - Indicators: Counter top in Path, “Mount Everest”

2. **Aconcagua**
   - Continent: South America
   - Country: Argentina
   - Elevation: 22,841 ft
   - Languages Spoken: Spanish, Araukian

3. **Kilimanjaro**
   - Continent: Africa
   - Country: Tanzania
   - Elevation: 19,340 ft
   - Languages Spoken: Swahili, English

4. **Elbrus**
   - Continent: Europe
   - Country: Russia
   - Elevation: 18,510 ft
   - Languages Spoken: Russian

5. **McKinley (Denali)**
   - Continent: North America
   - Country: United States
   - Elevation: 20,320 ft
   - Languages Spoken: English, Spanish, others

6. **Kosciuszko**
   - Continent: Australia
   - Country: Australia
   - Elevation: 7,310 ft
   - Languages Spoken: English

7. **Vinson Massif**
   - Continent: Antarctica
   - Country: Antarctica
   - Elevation: 16,050 ft
   - Languages Spoken: English, Spanish, others

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**Learning and Design Narrative**

**Learning Elements and Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Design Element</th>
<th>Intended Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; Geography</td>
<td>• Seven Summits Interpretive Path</td>
<td>• Interpretive walk around track, including planned activities testing student knowledge about the world’s tallest mountains and major continents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pretend Mountain/Natural Area</td>
<td>• Experimental play in and around a “natural” mountain ecosystem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecology</td>
<td>• Recycling/Composting Center</td>
<td>• Understanding mountain and valley formations (guided exercises)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ripple Plaza</td>
<td>• Contemplation about how the things that individuals do can influence what others do and affect the natural environment (individual and/or guided exercises)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>• Mountain Valley Walkway</td>
<td>• Guided activities to learn the animals that inhabit mountains around the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seven Summits Interpretive Path</td>
<td>• Counting mountains and valleys in both English and Spanish (individual and/or guided exercises)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>• Mountain Valley Walkway</td>
<td>• Counting the highest mountains on each of the world’s seven continents (individual and/or guided exercises)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seven Summits Interpretive Path</td>
<td>• Ranking the mountains in order of elevation (individual and/or guided exercises)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>• Student Art, banners, murals, tiles, and other projects</td>
<td>• Using the sustainability theme, have students design banners around ideas of what we can do to protect our earth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Mountian-Valley Pathway**

- Mountain Valley Pathway: Scaled-to-scale, concrete elements include E.C.E. that encourages counting in English and Spanish and incorporates mountain theme.

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**Locating the Boulders**

**Seven Summits Plaza: Locating the Peaks**

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**English, Spanish, others**

**Languages Spoken:**

- **Country: Argentina**
  - Elevation: 22,841 ft
  - Languages Spoken: Spanish, Araukian

- **Country: United States**
  - Elevation: 20,320 ft
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**Native languages of students go beyond just Spanish and English.**
Learning Landscapes at Valverde Elementary School, Denver Public Schools
University of Colorado Denver - Department of Landscape Architecture - LDAR 6606: Learning Landscapes Studio - Instructor Chris Schoeller
Student Designer: Deryn Ruth Goodwin - Professional Landscape Architect: Christopher Hoy - December 9, 2010

The Seven Summits Playground:
Mountains, Language, Culture and Art

- Swing pit
- Bioswale
- Accessible concrete ramp
- Alpine habitat gardens
- Performance plaza with world map of seven summits
- Eco-play area
- Hard court games
- Cooltopper shade structure
- "Snow" (white rubberized material)
- Native perimeter plantings
- "Seven summits" boulders (see design narrative for more information)
- Track/interpretive "seven summits path"
- Interpretive "seven summits" sculpture
- Inv. "Everest" climb play structure
- Overlook plaza with slide to play pit below
- Existing tree to remain
- Community/student wall mural
- Accessible pathway
- Decorative banners
- Maintenance gate
- Recycling and composting center
- Custom gateway structure
**SEVEN SUMMITS PLAZA:**
**SETTING THE STAGE FOR INTERPRETATION**

Surrounded by natural shade, alpine habitat gardens, and an eco-play area, this large plaza can accommodate outdoor performances and community activities such as festivals and Zumba classes. The world map is also inscribed in the surface, locating the highest mountain on each of the 7 continents and introducing the 7 Summits Interpretive pathway around the field. The first stop on that path is “Mt. Everest,” the highest mountain in the world. Here, children can climb a mountain-like play feature surrounded by a safe, bouncy white material meant to imply snow. Paw prints of mountain animals are also inscribed in the overlook plaza to teach students about wildlife.

**RIPPLE PLAZA:**
**RAISING AWARENESS OF OUR IMPACTS**

Adapted from ideas about self-awareness in the 2003 Master Plan as well as from current desires of teachers to encourage environmental stewardship, this plaza is meant to remind students of the positive impact they can have on the world as they exit the school building and enter the playground.

The Ripple Effect:
- What I do
- What my friends and family do
- What my community does
- What my state does
- What my country does
- What the world does

**INNER COURTYARD:**
**EDUCATIONAL, FUN AND INFORMAL**

Located at the main student drop-off, this custom gateway feature announces Valverde’s Learning Landscape to the community. It incorporates the building’s neoclassical architecture, as well as ideas about the mountains and the school’s S.A.I.L. saying (Success, Achievement, Integrity, Learning).

In order to keep heat and noise levels to a minimum, garden beds and a natural area have been included here that also provide outdoor learning spaces and classroom gardens. Game tables, hopscotch and the educational “Mountain-Valley Pathway” add educational value and fun. See design narrative for more on the concrete pathway.
Concepts and Materiality

Brick, Forms & Color Palette Sympathetic to Historic Architecture

- Historic detailing provides color palette
- Brick palettes
- Historic pilaster
- Handrails and fences should match black window edging
- Color palette

Varied Treatment of the Ground Surface

- Pour in place rubber surfacing
- Integral colored concrete
- Sandblasted concrete
- Painted asphalt
- Flat top boulders
- Rough-hewn boulders

Trees and Plant Character

- Penstemons & other hardy perennials
- Poppies, in drifts
- Blue avena grass & other ornamental grasses
- Blue gramma grass & other native grasses
- Chinkapin oak & other shade trees
- Creeping willow
- Classroom gardens

Student and Community Art Projects

- Student and community murals
- School art projects to soften fence lines
- Student-designed banners
- Student-designed tiles