

Reshaping Schools

“Outside the School - Site Planning Workshop & Awareness Tour”

The 21st Century Schools Department of the Portland Public School administration is in the process of crafting new policies and guidelines for the infrastructure of all district schools. These policies will guide strategies to help ensure the passage of bond measures for capital improvements. Community and in-house workshops and conferences in all areas of facilities planning are being held.

Steven Koch, FASLA of Koch Landscape Architecture developed and facilitated the School Site Planning Workshop and Awareness Tour in August 2009 at Franklin High School and Atkinson Elementary School in Portland.

Participants included over 30 PPS staff from all fields, OSU outreach program coordinators, City of Portland Parks and BES staff. Growing Gardens staff and landscape and architecture design professionals also attended. By providing in-depth background information and utilizing the varied knowledge of the participants issues were defined and common threads revealed.

The event actively engaged participants. A tour of two school sites and the recording of personal and group insights provided critical information for the workshop. The direct tour experience and exposure to the challenges faced by School District and its programs set the stage for participants to realistically approach complex school site issues. Small groups then designed ideal site plans for a variety of schools, each with unique and diverse program elements.

The workshop's planning solutions and the viewpoints gathered from a full spectrum of professionals are essential to the process of successful policy development. Through thoughtful planning PPS is helping ensure schools provide engaging and supportive learning environments for our children, our communities and the future.

