

Cedar Park Elementary School

Design Team Meeting

January 29, 2017

Led by Ms. Dedy Fauntleroy

NOTES

A couple basics:

Cedar Park will open in September 2017 as an Option School.

The focus of Cedar Park was determined to be Expeditionary Learning (EL)

What is an option school?

An option school is a school that uses a specific teaching model or focus in addition to the basic common core curriculum (reading writing, math). Students must opt-in to an option school by completing paperwork with the school district. If applications exceed enrollment, preference is given to students with siblings already at the option school and students who live nearest the school.

What is Expeditionary Learning (EL)?

Expeditionary Learning is a project -based, student-led learning model. It can look different at different schools, but here's some generalities based on information from Ms. Dedy and parents who are familiar with the model:

- Each grade level has a quarterly focus
- There are often school-wide projects as well.
- Example: At Queen Anne Elementary, one focus was cities. Students learned about buildings and transportation and infrastructure. They actually built a city.
- Kids tend to really get into the themes, which build enthusiasm for learning. The interest-driven learning model allows for differentiated learning (rather than ability-driven learning.)

How is Expeditionary Learning SIMILAR to a traditional school model?

- EL schools held to the same curriculum standards
- EL schools use common core with reader's workshop, writer's workshop, etc.
- EL schools participate in standardized testing

How does the transition from elementary to middle school go for kids moving up from EL schools?

- Overall, just fine, although it largely depends on the student.

Why was Expeditionary Learning chosen as the option school focus?

- Delays in the final decision to open Cedar Park resulted in a short timeline to decide on a focus and start community outreach.
- There are other EL schools in Seattle Public Schools that use an EL model. We can use those schools as models and resources to develop our program. [Thornton Creek](#) and [Pathfinder K-8](#) .
- [Queen Anne](#) and [Orca K – 8](#) use a similar project-based model.
- EL is a popular teaching model.
- EL allows for other teaching models (STEM, IB, Arts) to be integrated in if desired.

Why were the options discussed at the community meeting NOT selected?

International School (with language immersion): Usually, there is an expectation of a pathway school so that students can continue their immersion education through middle and high school. Because neither Jane Adams nor Nathan Hale have this, it is not ideal at this time.

International Baccalaureate (IB): This is a school with a strong focus on international studies and global citizenship. There is a foreign language requirement at all grades, but it is NOT an immersion program. Two main challenges to IB were explained:

- IB works best when there is a pathway through higher grades and there is not currently an IB middle school. (Although there are IB high schools.)

- There is a rigorous process to be officially designated as an International Baccalaureate program. Again, not enough time to complete this process.

STEM (Science Technology Engineering & Math):

- Hazel Wolf is already offering STEM
- John Rogers is going to offer it in the near future.
- The building is not ideally set up for STEM (or STEAM which includes Arts)
 - Not all classrooms have sinks (none in the portables)
 - There is not a separate science lab or art room
 - The school is not yet equipped with some of the technologies that lend themselves to STEM.
- All of these challenges could be overcome, but would require significant capital investments. That is not likely given the huge budget shortfall at SPS. A grant is possible, but not a sure thing.

What will be the boundaries of Cedar Park Elementary?

Technically, anyone can apply to attend any option school. However, there is a geozone for Cedar Park. Students who live within the geozone are given priority in the school assignment process. Cedar Park geozone can be found on the [website](#).

How does transportation work for option schools?

Just as with neighborhood school, there is a walk zone of 1 mile, so that students who live within a mile of the school are not eligible for bus transportation. That said, Olympic Hills students who live within a mile but on the west side of Lake City Way ARE eligible for bus service, given the dangers of small children crossing a 6 lane highway. It is not yet known if that exception will remain in place for Cedar Park.

Outside of the walk-zone, the bus area for Cedar Park is the same as Jane Addams Middle School (which includes the geozones for Olympic Hills Elementary, John Rogers Elementary, Sacajawea, and some of Olympic View Elementary).

When can students enroll in Cedar Park?

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| Now | Enroll in Seattle Public Schools (Kindergarten and new students only) |
| Feb 6 | Open Enrollment forms are available on the SPS Website |
| Feb 13 - 24 | Priority registration period for tie-breakers (siblings and geozone) |
| May 31 | Open Enrollment closes |

What is the status of the Cedar Park Principal position?

Background: Dedy Fauntleroy announced at the December 16 community meeting that she will not be serving as the Principal for Cedar Park, but will continue in her role as planning principal until a replacement is in place.

What is the timeline for this hire?

Ms. Dedy explained that the district principal pool should be opening soon. The hiring process will be determined in the near future.

Will the new principal and staff have Expeditionary Learning experience?

We don't know, but there was a strong consensus that the principal at least should have EL experience, and hopefully some of the teaching staff.

An Olympic Hills parent pointed out that for current OHE families, the Cedar Park staff represent a huge unknown. The OHE teaching staff are incredible, are known to us, and already know our kids. Ms. Dedy responded that the teaching staff at Cedar Park is likely to be all new to Cedar Park. It was previously suggested to the community that some of the Olympic Hills staff might choose to apply to Cedar Park to ease the transition. But this is entirely up to the teachers, new principal and Cedar Park hiring committee. And so remains an unknown that parents will have to weigh.

What is the outreach/communications plan to recruit families to Cedar Park?

Ms. Dedy explained that the principals of Olympic Hills and John Rogers have been very supportive of Cedar Park, and will continue to share information with their student populations. But we must be aware that there is a fine line between collaboration and competition. Ms. Dedy reminded us that we must be respectful of other school communities' desire to serve the students in their community at their own schools.

There is also a very strong desire to open Cedar Park as a school that is as diverse as the community it serves (greater Lake City area). Ms. Dedy suggested the following ways of reaching diverse families

1. Vary the times and locations of future Design Team meetings to be as inclusive as possible of families with busy work schedules, transportation challenges, child care needs, etc.

So the Design Team will be entirely ad hoc from meeting to meeting.

Given the ad hoc approach, it will be critical to keep everyone in the loop.

- Build an ongoing contact list of interested parties, meeting attendees, etc
- Push out information to everyone on the list (beyond just updating the website).
- Publish the Design Team meeting agenda prior to each meeting
- Publish the notes from each meeting.

2. Do outreach at community gathering spaces where diverse families are. Some examples might include Lake City Court, Jackson Park Tutoring Center, Lake City Library, religious spaces, local preschools. Ms. Dedy requested that parents send her their ideas to increase inclusivity.

3. Engage our social networks.

Will there be an Open House?

There was a strong desire for an Open House. Ms. Dedy said she will discuss this option with Ms. Crum (the current Olympic Hills Principal) to consider times that would not disrupt instruction (such as evening).

Is there an enrollment goal?

There is no minimum number of students required to open the school, but the more the better. 250 is an ideal goal, but that is not likely in the first year. For example, we might expect low enrollment in upper grades (4th & 5th).

What about special programs?

- There will be a Head Start program at Cedar Park, which will help build enrollment in future years if parents opt-in at the kindergarten year.
- There will be a resource room
- There may not be a self-contained Special Ed classroom.

What about the facility?

Library

- There is currently a library at Cedar Park. It is housed in a classroom, so is significantly smaller than a typical elementary school library.
- The proposed capital budget includes money to buy all new books for the Cedar Park library
- Note: After the meeting, SPS Capital Planning staff stated that the proposed budget would combine two classrooms into an expanded library

Computer Lab

- The computer lab is currently housed on the stage in the auditorium.
- This is presumably a temporary situation based on high enrollment of Olympic Hills students and would not be necessary next year when Cedar Park opens with significantly lower enrollment.
- Note: After the meeting, SPS Capital Planning staff stated that they are considering using laptops that would travel to the classrooms, rather than a designated computer lab. This is still unclear.

What about a PTA?

Ms. Dedy suggested that parents who are committed to Cedar Park should start working to form a PTA or PTO. The Seattle Council PTSA has information on how to do this.

NEXT STEPS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

- Learn more about Expeditionary Learning.
- Go on tours of other schools with an Expeditionary Learning model
 - Thornton Creek (EL) [Tour Dates](#)
 - Orca K-8 [Tours](#)
 - Queen Anne Elementary (Project Based with Creative Approach) [Tour Dates](#)
- Help Ms. Dedy represent Cedar Park (and recruit families) at the Option School Fair at Cleveland High School. Saturday, January 28, 10 am – 2 pm.
- Get trained to be on the site hiring committee to help hire teachers, office staff, etc. [Upcoming Training Dates](#)
- Help build the contact list for community outreach by sending your suggestions to Ms. Dedy (with complete contact information if possible)
- Push out information to your social networks (FB, NextDoor, Block Watch groups, Community Bulletin Boards, Preschool families, etc)