

# Academic Report

Green Woods Charter School

*“Creating active young stewards of the natural world.”*

JANUARY 2012



## GOALS FOR NEW SCHOOL DESIGN

- **Creation of indoor/outdoor space for Universal Design**
- **Create indoor/outdoor space to support award winning curriculum**
- **Create space that supports the Green Woods community**
- **Create sustainable design that supports, reinforces, and reflects the curriculum**
- **Create a facility that presents a sustainable image to the community**
- **Create a facility that promotes accessibility and safety**
- **Develop a design that balances quantity, quality, and cost**
- **Create a flexible, technology-rich space that will support Green Woods' evolving curriculum**

## **Sustainability Realized!**

The BIG news this month is that we are building our future! For 8 years, we have worked so hard at the staff level to lay a solid foundation of academic excellence at Green Woods. But even as we were creating what has become an award-winning curriculum, we knew that without a solid business plan, and our own building in which to grow and thrive, our academic program could not evolve and our future would be in jeopardy. For those, past and present, responsible for helping to build our foundation, realizing this milestone of a new school, in which to educate more students, is a validation of all that hard work as it ensures our fiscal strength and sustainability.

Recent strategies outlined by our Board of Trustees have both ignited and fueled this effort. As a result, this past month, we began to create our future. We spent many hours putting our vision to paper both programmatically and architecturally. Having this opportunity to build a school that not only reflects our current program goals, but also allows for so many academic enhancements in the future, has been incredible. Creating outcomes for the design at the January 4<sup>th</sup> visioning session, together with students, staff and parents, reinforced what we had always imagined our school could be.

Seeing the new school come to fruition will be a lasting tribute to those years of hard work. Most rewarding, however, will be in knowing that as a result of our trailblazing spirit, our school and our academic sustainability will be built on solid, fiscal ground. We are proud to be a part of building this future knowing Green Woods will grow and thrive so more children can be taught an innovative curriculum, by outstanding educators, for generations to come.

*“A shared vision is not an idea...it is rather, a force in people's hearts...at its simplest level, a shared vision is the answer to the question, 'What do we want to create?'*  
...Peter Senge



From this... ...to this!!



# Building our Future

## Architect Team Turns Vision into Reality!

When you spend time with a creative and innovative architect team, you soon learn that anything is possible! Recently, the J2A/Little team of Joe Jancuska, Beth Buffington, Tom Balke, Tomas Eliaeson, and Jay Nelson spent three days at Green Woods. The goal was to continue the design process by getting additional input from our teachers about how best to realize the curriculum-related goals established at our January 4<sup>th</sup> visioning session.

Never at a loss for creative ideas, our teachers first shared the many challenges students and teachers face when teaching and learning in our current facilities. Then they dreamed, out loud, about the ways our program could be delivered and enhanced in a real school building.

Central to our discussion was the seamless integration of the indoor and outdoor learning environments; to ensure that all of our students are learning in bright, spacious, healthy classrooms filled with natural light; how innovative technology can and

will be used to enhance our academic goals and, finally, our desire to design an outdoor learning lab and play area that specifically meets our students' grade-level needs and curricular goals.

Teachers commented – “it will be wonderful for our kids to finally be out of trailers.”

We began this session by walking the entire site of the new school and we immediately envisioned what this site can become to our students and community.

We can't wait to break ground and build our future!



## 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Shares Unique Ideas for New School!

We weren't really sure what to expect when the first grade class asked to meet with the architect team to share their own ideas for our new school.

Never shy about speaking their mind, however, our first graders enthusiastically provided their ideas in writing and in person to our very receptive team of architects.

As it turns out, we were all truly impressed with their creativity.

Ideas ranged from hot tubs to an ice-cream parlor. (By the way, both ideas were highly supported by the staff!) One avid Phillies fan requested we build a baseball field, (maybe one day, Dylan) while another asked for, “lots of recess space so that first grade students could run around at recess without bumping heads.”

(This same student also mentioned that, as a result, the nurse sometimes runs out of ice packs during recess.)

What was most interesting for us to hear was that the majority of the first graders asked for the same thing that other grades have requested for years: they want their very own lockers to decorate so they can have a place to keep their personal things. Oh, and they also insisted they need a pond!

While hot tubs and an ice-cream parlor probably won't make the final design, and a baseball field may need to wait for another time, the architects reassured our first grade students that lockers, recess space and a pond would definitely make the cut.