

Building Community to Build a Building

Jim Peterson
Van Lunen Maroon Platoon Cohort
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A real community is one in which the people build things together. --Rex Miller

Key learnings from my Van Lunen Center project, to design the learning spaces for South Christian High School for generations to come.

Empower Designers

- Each stakeholder gives input in a different way, be flexible with how input for the design is gathered.
- At every stage of decision making repeat your presentation so that people know what is happening and can respond.
- Know that some design will happen after you tell people it should be done. Plan for it.
- Have broad buy in on the design themes and include your core stakeholders in creating them so that if decision have to be made quickly you have direction and can base decisions in that work.

Communicate The Plan

- You have to build a community before you can build a building.
- No one stakeholder will learn the same thing from a specific way of communicating, it is on the school to communicate in several different ways so that everyone is involved.
- Many times a communication tool designed for one audience and with one medium can and should be used with other audiences and translated into other mediums.
- Listening is every bit as important as telling your story.

Educational Vision for the Spaces

- Changing spaces always changes culture. It is important anticipate this and give everyone the tools to adapt and grow.
- We implemented a modified block schedule this year, and I heard several times, this will work so much better in the new school. This build anticipation and excitement, but also prepares teachers to deliver on day one.
- We passed as a group of five schools a three year plan for growth in learning and faith formation that will parallel our move and have teachers ready to grow into the new spaces.
- Because this work was done with feeder schools students will also be ready to use the new spaces to make their learning in high school shine.