

A Community Transforms

1. San Lorenzo Unified School District

- a. 9 elementary /3 middle/2 high/1 continuation high/1 adult
- b. South of Oakland
- c. Working Class Community
- d. Generation Attendance with a traditional set up
 - i. Neighborhood attendance elementary
 - ii. Hormonal filled middle schools
 - iii. Comprehensive high schools
- e. A traditional set up with 1950's facilities to match
 - i. Double loaded corridors
 - ii. Finger plans with perimeter shared facilities
 - iii. Continuation high school squeezed into an elementary school campus, and sharing with county preschool
 - iv. Slightly undersized classrooms, outdated science labs
 - v. Portables started to come out to the campuses and stay.
- f. 2000 modernization to the 2 high schools took care of some much needed infrastructural upgrades like HVAC, lighting, ADA, etc. while these modernizations were desperately needed they were far from inspiring.
- g. Scores sliding, demographics changing, SLZUSD recognized a large shakeup to the status quo necessary.
- h. Measure E Bond –
 - i. state modernization funds won't be available for another 20 years
 - ii. Attendance Levels have plateau, even dropped due to the test scores, so no new construction funding available either.
 - iii. Some Williams Act Funding is available for a few schools, but not all, and has a stigma to it.
 - iv. Test the waters with a local bond. Housing prices rising significantly. A small bond easy for taxpayers to stomach and not so big as to be too daunting.
 - v. Nov 2004 approved \$49 million dollars
 - vi. Focus on Restrooms, Portable Classroom Replacement, New Science Labs, and Library Renovations. Our contract was to proceed with this work at San Lorenzo High School, Arroyo High School, and Royal sunset Continuation High School.

2. Small Learning Communities

- a. Our research quickly uncovered passionate teachers and faculty members who were invited by Superintendent Arnie Glassburg to think outside of the curriculum box of no child left behind. Programs like the Health Academy, or East Bay Arts were succeeding with raising test scores while keeping the students engaged with their education.
- b. These programs were fitting in where possible into the campuses and just weren't being served well enough.

- c. We researched with the SLZUSD District Core Committee various small school facilities around the country. Saw project based set ups, Student Advisor Independent Studies, you name it.
- d. Came up with a SLC program to overlay onto all three campuses to see how they would best fit. However, we were given one rule:
 - i. Arroyo and San Lorenzo High School have a historic place in the community...the sports programs, the multi generation attendance, the camaraderie present at both campuses and yes the rivalry between the two. While giving students the benefit of a smaller group of peers we must maintain the comprehensive character of each campus. A student may belong to the Tech Links Academy but she will Graduate from Arroyo High School.

3. Master Planning Process

- a. At this point we began meeting with Site Steering Committees – groups specific to each campus made up of Administration, Faculty and Students. Developed master plans for each one – and the 2nd biggest hurdle was to decentralize science classrooms into team teaching clusters.
 - i. 2nd biggest because we were able to make that happen, but we couldn't convince the administrative teams like counselors to split up throughout the campus.
 - ii. That's ok – the point of the masterplan is to have goals to reach for over the next 20-40 years. Each step in the desired direction, and each phase of construction will get you there eventually.
- b. San Lorenzo High School
 - i. Campus into 4 SLCS – 400 each, 1600 student capacity
 - ii. Each existing classroom building along the north/south circulation spine would be designated to a small learning community. Each small learning community would maintain 1 “shared facility” like the library, admin, cafeteria, health clinic to anchor it back into the overall campus.
 - iii. Each SLC would also get a new classroom building with science labs and classrooms that exemplified the SLC approach of team teaching. These new buildings would surround a small quad that would be home to that particular SLC.
 - iv. “Dream Big” ideas included
 - 1. Provide a new face to the community
 - 2. a formal amphitheater/stage and quad on the northwest of campus for the entire student population to use and share.
 - 3. A performing arts facility including both a TV studio and a theater on the northeast of the campus, a facility lacking from all the district campuses.
- c. Arroyo School
 - i. 4 SLC at 400 students – 1600 capacity
 - ii. Here the existing buildings would be divided into the SLC's back to back. New exterior doors and covered walks will create lively outdoor courtyards. Again to be home to that SLC, yet stay within the overall fabric.

- iii. An exciting aspect here will be the conversion of a corridor with lockers to one with meeting areas, project display and storage, computer labs.
- iv. “Dream Big” ideas included
 - 1. Provide a new Face to the Community -
 - 2. Moving the library to a new facility within the heart of the campus, and relocating and enlarging the admin offices
- d. Royal Sunset High School
 - i. 2 SLC’s – 400 students – 800 capacity
 - ii. 2 things were happening simultaneously at RSHS
 - 1. A passionate principal was leading the SLC charge and was getting a lot of success, even with the lower quality facilities
 - 2. The “stepchild” stigma to the continuation school drained on student and staff performance alike. The facilities couldn’t support high school curriculum. Kindergarten sized toilets did little to raise the expectations of the continuation students.
 - 3. Preschool facilities needed separate entrances, used up some classroom spaces, and raised concerns with the community.
 - iii. So – SLZUSD recognized the need to utilize the Measure E funding to add some inspiration to this campus as well!
 - 1. “Dream Bid” ideas included:
 - a. Art Studio/Gallery/Library at a junction spot to be shared by both SLC’s.
 - b. Convert existing church building on site to be a performing arts facility and construct additional support classrooms.
 - c. Celebrate an explore the relationship that can be cultivated between the preschool and the continuation high students.

4. Design Process

- a. With SLC program and MP in hand – how best to use the Measure E funds to get the most impact?
 - i. At SLHS we constructed 2 prototype slc buildings with decentralized science, renovated the library, and some restroom renovations
 - ii. At AHS we constructed 1 prototype SLC building and 1 smaller version that only included the science component, renovated the library, some restroom renovation. We converted 1 building to exterior circulation, and designed for the decentralized administration....but changes can be hard so we weren’t able to proceed with the admin scope of work.
 - iii. At RSHS we served both needs – a new science lab with all the gas, fume hoods, lab sinks needed for a fully functioning science curriculum. A flexible art and dance space with cabinetry designed to be flexible pending the teacher of the day.
- b. This design process was just as involved as during the master plan.
 - i. We work with the steering committees to fine tune the design of the SLC buildings, looking at a team teaching model with 1 lecture space, 2 project spaces, 1 classroom

- 1 flex science lab, 1 chem science lab. Looking in detail with how these rooms interact with one another and with the campus as a whole
- ii. Worked with the district M&O department to use their standards where available and fine tune standards where they had none
- c. Construction was also public school standard
 - i. Low Bid General Contractor
 - ii. June '07 through June '08 construction, 3 campuses by 1 GC.
 - iii. Citizen's Oversight Committee
- d. Construction was a success!
 - i. 1.0% Change Order
 - ii. The Community Loved it!
 - iii. The Students Loved It!
- e. Measure O approved by another overwhelming majority in November 2008
 - i. Continued portable replacements and science lab upgrades
 - ii. Solar Panels to parking lots and Field Renovations.
- 5. Phase 2 construction
 - a. We begin construction on Phase 2 at all three campuses this June.
 - b. On the shoulders of our previous projects we are able to move forward with
 - i. A science quad at AHS – opening up the administration to improve campus connections.
 - ii. A science quad with student planted gardens at SLHS
 - iii. A music and science building at RSHS
 - c. And Most Exciting: The Passion for the SLC also tapped into the state funding available for Career Technical Education. Now that's another presentation all together – but let me share some imagery
 - i. A State of the Art TV Studio – complete with editing suites, film studio with dual slab construction for sound isolation, professional grade equipment. Getting these students ready to meet the world head on....and available for rental to the local film industry to add a few bucks to the district wallet.

San Lorenzo Unified has experienced the trials that everyone has experienced during these last few trying years. While voter approved the bonds are difficult to sell, teach layoffs have tried the focus and patience of their site staff. But the passion remains, the goal to support all of their kids remains, and the community is dedicated to support and inspire their students.