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TERRELL ISD EDUCATIONAL SPECIFICATIONS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

Educational Specifications establish the design standards and guiding concepts for new construction and major renovations in Terrell ISD. Their intent is to ensure facilities provide safe, engaging, and effective learning environments that align with the district's instructional goals and community priorities. Required by law for Texas public schools, these specifications define how learning should occur within facilities, set performance expectations, and include both narrative and graphical elements to guide the design process.

DEFINITION

In Texas, Educational Specifications (Ed Specs) are comprehensive documents that serve as design and construction guidelines for educational facilities. Acting as a blueprint for architects, planners, and school districts, Ed Specs ensure the built environment supports a district's educational goals, instructional methods, and student needs. While the Texas Education Agency (TEA) provides overarching requirements, each district tailors its Ed Specs to reflect its specific programs, instructional vision, and community identity.

STATE REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with 19 Tex. Admin. Code §61.1040 – School Facilities Standards for Construction after November 1, 2021, TEA requires all school districts to develop and periodically review a written educational program to guide the design of new facilities and major renovations. Specifically, Rule §61.1040(d)(2) outlines the elements that must be included.

REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF EDUCATIONAL SPECIFICATIONS

To be used by district personnel and design professionals, Terrell ISD's Educational Specifications include:

A. Mission, Vision, Goals, and Pedagogy – A statement of the district's instructional purpose and philosophy.

B. Preliminary Facility Details – Facility type, grade levels served, and maximum student enrollment.

C. Safety and Security Provisions – Relevant elements of the district's

Multi-Hazard Emergency Operations Plan that inform facility functionality and demonstrate compliance with TEC §37.108.

D. Inclusive Design Statement – Goals and considerations supported by the district; and

How inclusive design principles will be integrated into all new and renovated facility designs.

E. Minimum Space Requirements – Total square footage necessary to meet the quantitative method of compliance.



EDUCATIONAL SPECIFICATIONS DEVELOPMENT

Building on the long-range planning process, Terrell ISD's Educational Specifications are developed as a guiding document for approval by the Board of Trustees. This framework articulates the district's mission, vision, instructional priorities, and design standards, ensuring that future facilities align with Terrell ISD's educational goals. The document is prepared in compliance with **19 Tex. Admin. Code §61.1036–61.1040**, which requires school districts to develop educational specifications for instructional facilities.



DISTRICT VISION, MISSION GOALS, AND PEDAGOGY

Established in 1883, Terrell Independent School District has a proud history of providing quality education to students. It is our belief that the future of our community, state, and nation hinges on the education the students receive in our school system.

Terrell is located approximately 25 miles east of Dallas on Interstate Highway 20 and U.S. Highway 80. State Highway 34, State Highway 205 and FM148 provide north-south access.

Terrell ISD encompasses 166 square miles and is the largest district in Kaufman County. With an enrollment of approximately 5,250 students, our district has one early childhood center, four elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, one child and adolescent school, and one alternative education facility which are all fully accredited by the Texas Education Agency.



Mission

The mission of Terrell ISD, a diverse community rooted in connection, is to provide an exceptional learning experience in a safe, nurturing environment, empowering our students to achieve excellence, and to be responsible and ethical members of an ever-changing society.

Vision

The vision of Terrell ISD is to cultivate an innovative learning community where students are prepared to adapt and excel in a complex and rapidly changing world.

Values



The 6
T.I.G.E.R.S.
Values

- 
Treat people right.
- 
Inspire Tiger pride.
- 
Get better every day.
- 
Every day, we show up and are productive.
- 
Reach toward our common goal as a team.
- 
Say what you mean; mean what you say; do what you say.



Board Goals

Goal One

Student Achievement: Accelerate student learning to dramatically increase the number of students who perform on or above grade level.

Goal Two

School Culture: Create safe and secure learning environments that focus on the social, emotional, and cultural needs of every student.

Goal Three

Human Capital and Resources: Develop the capacity of every teacher and staff member to deliver rigorous, enriching learning experiences to every student and ensure the safety of all.

Goal Four

Organizational Efficiency: Develop a resource allocation plan and long-term facilities plan that supports and maintains the financial stability of the district, is aligned with identified priorities, addresses future growth and facility improvement needs, and represents being good stewards of taxpayer funds.

Goal Five

Community Engagement and Outreach: Elevate district pride by strengthening partnerships with families, community, and the business community.



INCLUSIVE DESIGN

A seamless continuum of inclusive design aspects was considered at all Terrell ISD Educational Specification Summit discussions and meetings, fostering a dialogue focused on creating spaces that meet the needs of the whole child, including considerations for special abilities, language, culture, gender, age, social-emotional development, and other forms of human difference. Terrell ISD is committed to ensuring that the design of spaces provides equal access to all learning environments for every student. The following inclusive design goals should be considered by all stakeholders throughout all stages of long-range planning:

INCLUSIVE DESIGN GOALS

1. UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY

Ensure that all facilities are fully accessible to students, staff, and visitors, including individuals with disabilities.

2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engage the entire school community in the design process to ensure that the facilities meet the diverse needs of students, parents, and staff.

3. SUPPORT FOR DIVERSE LEARNING NEEDS

Incorporate a variety of learning spaces that support students with different learning needs, including those with learning disabilities, gifted students, 504 accommodations, and English language learners.

4. CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

Design spaces that reflect the cultural diversity of the student population and surrounding community, fostering a sense of pride, belonging, and respect.

5. FLEXIBLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Create adaptable spaces that support various learning styles, special abilities, and teaching preferences, allowing for personalized, differentiated instruction and varied teaching and learning modalities.

6. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Develop educational spaces that encourage social interaction and collaboration among all students, including those from different backgrounds and with varying abilities.

7. SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

Prioritize the physical and emotional safety of all students, ensuring that the environment supports mental health and well-being.

8. EQUITABLE ACCESS

Provide all students with the same opportunities to access and benefit from educational resources, materials, technology access, tools, and support.

STRATEGIC PROCESS

Terrell ISD is actively planning for the future, ensuring that facilities continue to meet evolving educational needs and reflect community expectations. In partnership with VLK, the district is engaging in a comprehensive long-range facility planning process that includes in-depth teaching and learning discussions, enrollment projections and capacity analysis, educational adequacy and facility condition assessments, and robust stakeholder input. Providing clear, intentional information about district needs and demonstrating how future facility improvements will benefit students, teachers, and the overall quality of education will be key to building trust and guiding the development of Educational Specifications and future projects. As part of this process, Terrell ISD hosted an Educational Specifications Summit with staff, students, and community members on **September 16, 2025**, to gather input and ensure all voices are represented in shaping the district's vision for learning environments.

VLK | CURATION®

As Terrell ISD continues to plan for the future of the district, a Curation Team was established to discern current teaching and learning information as it relates to instructional practices, visions for academic goals, and the intended student experience. The purpose was to ensure an understanding of the district's philosophy and culture while considering innovative and relevant design aspects of these specific learning environments. On **July 31, 2024**, the Terrell ISD Curation Team met to provide insights aligned with instructional practices, district goals, and future academic priorities. The meeting's primary purpose was to build a shared understanding of the district's philosophy for facility design across grade levels, with a focus on preparing students for future-ready learning experiences. Discussions explored desired experiences for students and staff, diverse teaching methodologies, and specialized curricula. These in-depth conversations produced a summary of findings intended to guide future planning and ensure that learning environments reflect Terrell ISD's Mission, Vision, and commitment to excellence for all students.



Experience Mapping

The Terrell ISD Curation Team engaged in collaborative group work to define key experiences that will best equip students for the future. These groups crafted ideal student and staff experiences across all grade levels, from pre-K through 12th grade. After presenting their insights into essential experiences, common themes emerged across the groups and were further elaborated on. These themes helped to unify the committee's vision, highlighting shared priorities. By identifying these themes, the committee reinforced the district's commitment to creating impactful, future-ready learning environments.

Overarching Student Perspective and Experiences

- Joy
- Pride
- Safe
- Welcoming
- Inclusive
- Accessibility
- Flexible

Overarching Staff Perspective and Experiences

- Equipped
- Accessible
- Safe
- Collaborative
- Joy
- Pride

Experience Mapping Summary

A school should be a vibrant and inclusive community where accessibility is a cornerstone, ensuring every student can thrive regardless of their needs. In Terrell ISD, the goal is to develop a place where pride is nurtured through achievement and personal growth, and joy is found in learning and shared experiences. The district strives to have a safe and secure environment that fosters a sense of comfort and trust among students, staff, and families. A professional atmosphere encourages both academic and personal development, while flexibility in teaching and learning allows for creativity and adaptability. Collaboration is key, with all stakeholders working together to create a space that helps all individuals feel valued and supported. Terrell ISD is committed to excellence for all children.

VLK | CURATION® Findings and District Pedagogy

Terrell ISD is committed to creating learning environments that prioritize student choice, adaptability, and meaningful connections. The district's vision emphasizes safe, flexible spaces that evolve with instructional needs, collaborative areas that encourage authentic interaction, and purposeful settings designed for hands-on, active learning. Classrooms and common spaces are envisioned as vibrant, inclusive, and accessible to ensure every student can thrive. A student-centered approach supports experiential learning, enriched extracurricular opportunities, and personalized pathways that nurture both achievement and well-being. By fostering pride, joy in learning, and a sense of belonging, Terrell ISD prepares students with the skills and confidence needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world.



TYPOLGY OF SPACES

On **September 16, 2025**, the Typology of Spaces activity was presented to the Educational Specifications Committee for Terrell ISD. The purpose of the activity was to provide visual examples of the built environment for teams to consider, adapt, or create in alignment with intended learning experiences identified through the Student Experience Mapping process. District administration, staff, students, and community members were presented with a variety of approaches to the design and atmosphere of spaces that could set a new standard of educational excellence. Through an interactive exercise, participants reviewed imagery representing classrooms, collaboration areas, and outdoor spaces, identifying key priorities such as abundant natural light, layouts that promote flexibility and collaboration, multipurpose areas, and dedicated outdoor spaces for both learning and overall well-being.



To further refine these priorities, the committee explored five typologies; **Outdoor Learning, Create, Discover, Exchange, and Impact** to determine district preferences for both student and adult learning environments. This analysis focused on identifying design approaches that best support Terrell ISD's goals of fostering belonging, collaboration, safety, and active learning experiences.

OUTDOOR LEARNING



Outdoor Learning areas provide space that extends the learning environment to support TEKS that are best taught in the sunlight, or with conditions that are difficult or impossible to create indoors. Writeable surfaces, water sources, and shade can be provided to best meet the intentionality of a learning area outside. A variety of spaces that allow students to learn outside the classroom are beneficial to students' social and emotional health. Terrell ISD shared preferences for an outdoor learning area to be connected to the cafeteria for extra student seating and well-being.

+CREATE

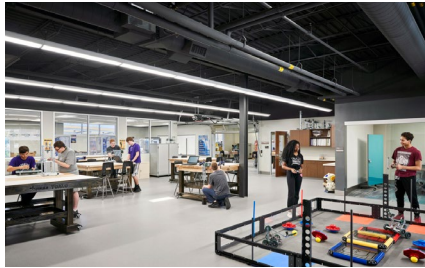
Classroom, Learning Studio, Flexible Learning Environment, Content-Rich Space, Purposeful Learning Area



The **Create** typology exists to redefine traditional classroom space. A more flexible learning environment lends itself to evolving curricula. Incorporating flexible furniture and elements of natural light will promote a sense of well-being for Terrell ISD students.

DISCOVER

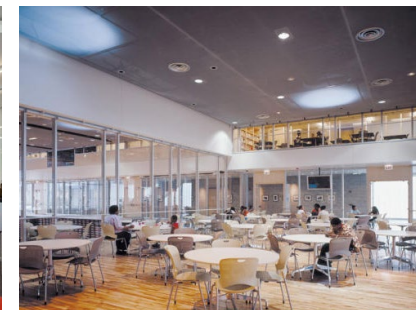
Science, Makerspace, CTE, STEM, Wet/Dry, Loud/Quiet, Messy, Library



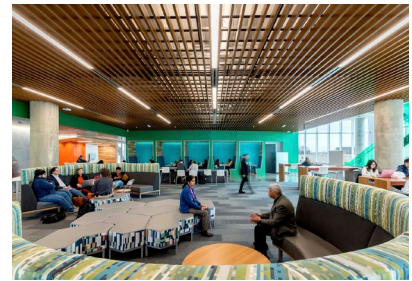
Discover areas are purposefully designed for specific content or processes. Discover spaces can provide flexible space such as a makerspace or, specifically for Terrell ISD, a makerspace or aligned CTE environment.

EXCHANGE

Large Collaboration



The largest type of collaboration area is the **Exchange** space, allowing for large groups to gather and learn together, hear a speaker, or extend the learning environment to use large materials or separate groups. This area may also function as a professional learning area for staff when a large learning environment is needed for continuous improvement.



Impact spaces are mid-sized collaboration areas providing flexibility for about 10 students to work together. These spaces provide for group independent time, or areas where pull-out programs may be accomplished. This extension of the learning environment provides for endless opportunities based on curricular needs.

TYPOLOGIES OF SPACE OUTCOMES

On September 16, 2025, Terrell ISD Educational Specifications committee members worked in teams to apply the information discussed. They reviewed preferred adjacencies based on their vision for how neighborhoods, or pods, should function in Terrell ISD learning environments. Teams analyzed and discussed presented plans, reaching consensus on priorities for future design needs.

Typology of Space Development

Utilizing all tools, data, and components of the process, and with VLK serving as a resource, the Terrell ISD Educational Specifications Committee developed detailed content on responsive and adaptable learning environments for elementary and secondary campuses. Specific attention was given to:

Safety

Student Experiences

Multipurpose Areas

Engagement

Collaboration

Accessibility

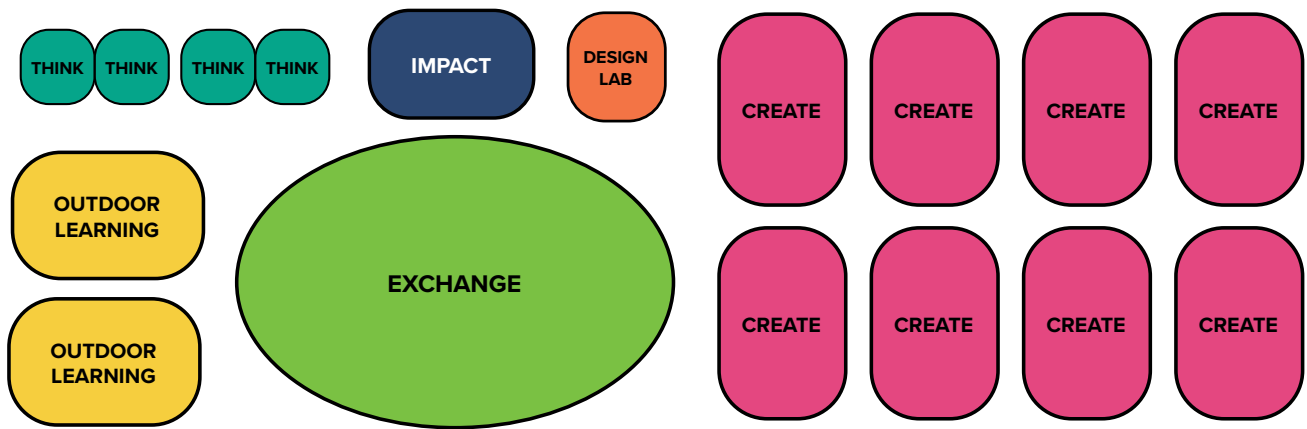


TYPOLOGY RELATIONSHIPS

Elementary Learning Environments

Function

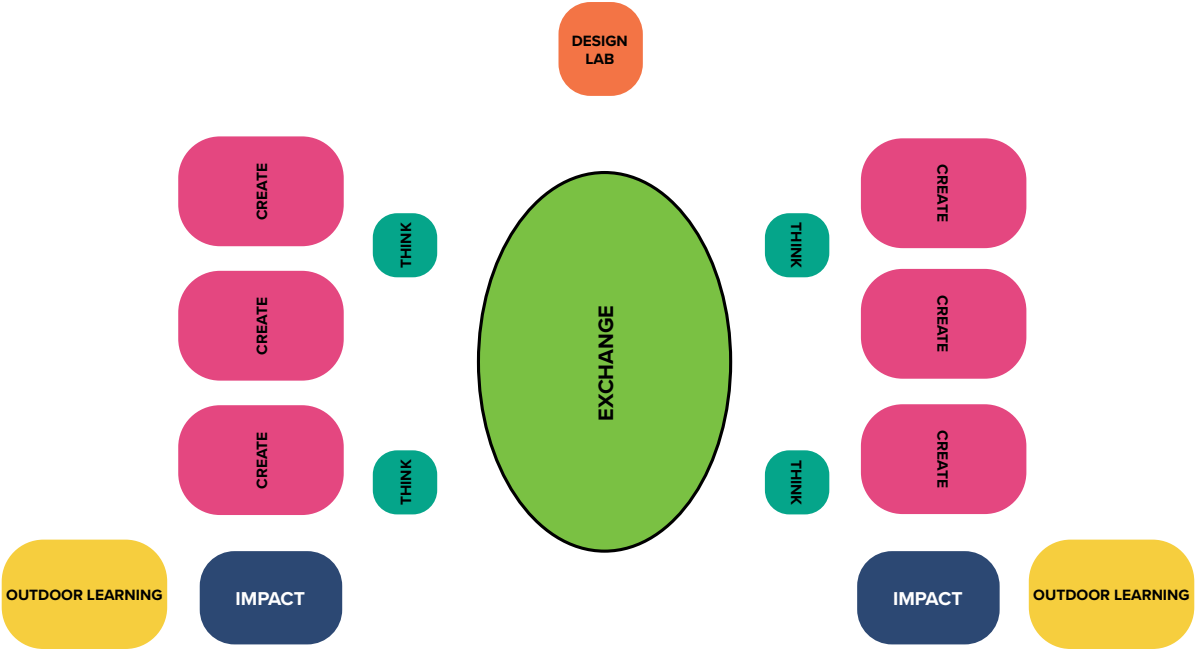
A neighborhood, or pod, is the arrangement of all spaces that are necessary for a grade level or department to function together as a team, depending on the grade level and/or feeder pattern. The intentional configuration of a variety of spaces is designed to function together to promote collaboration and efficacy. Each neighborhood consists of the following areas:



- Create = Classroom
- Outdoor Learning
- Think = Small Collaboration Space
- Exchange = Large Collaboration Space
- Design Lab = Professional Planning Space for Teachers
- Impact = Inspiring Learning Spaces

Elementary School Learning

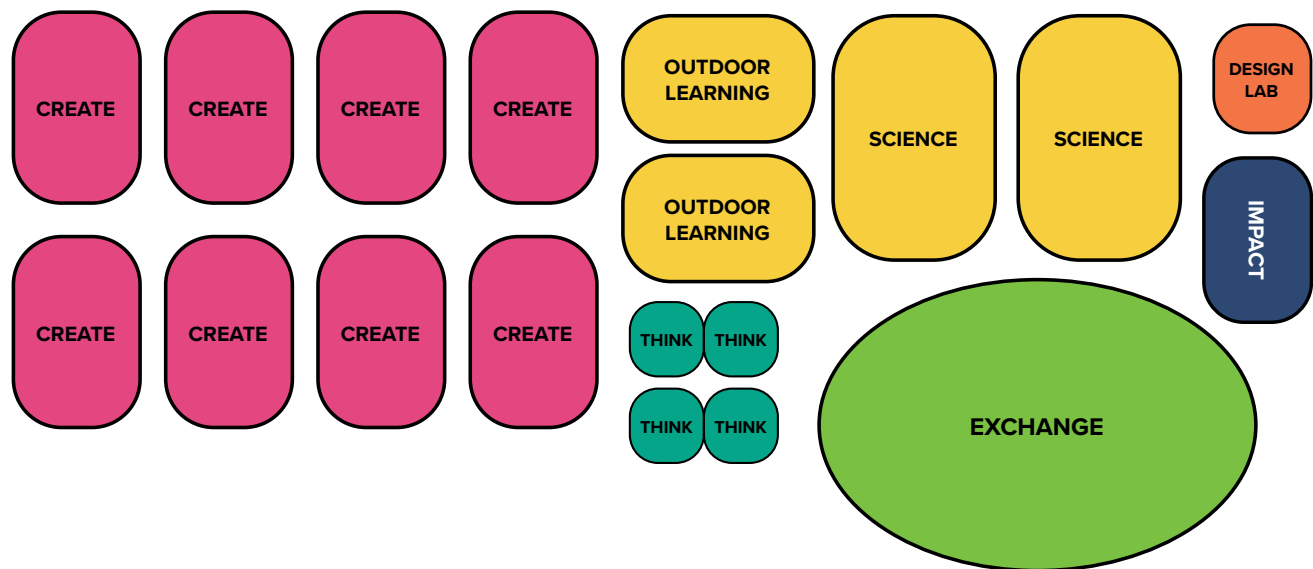
For design direction, the following demonstrates the preferred arrangement for elementary school instructional needs based on consensus.



Secondary Learning Environments

Function

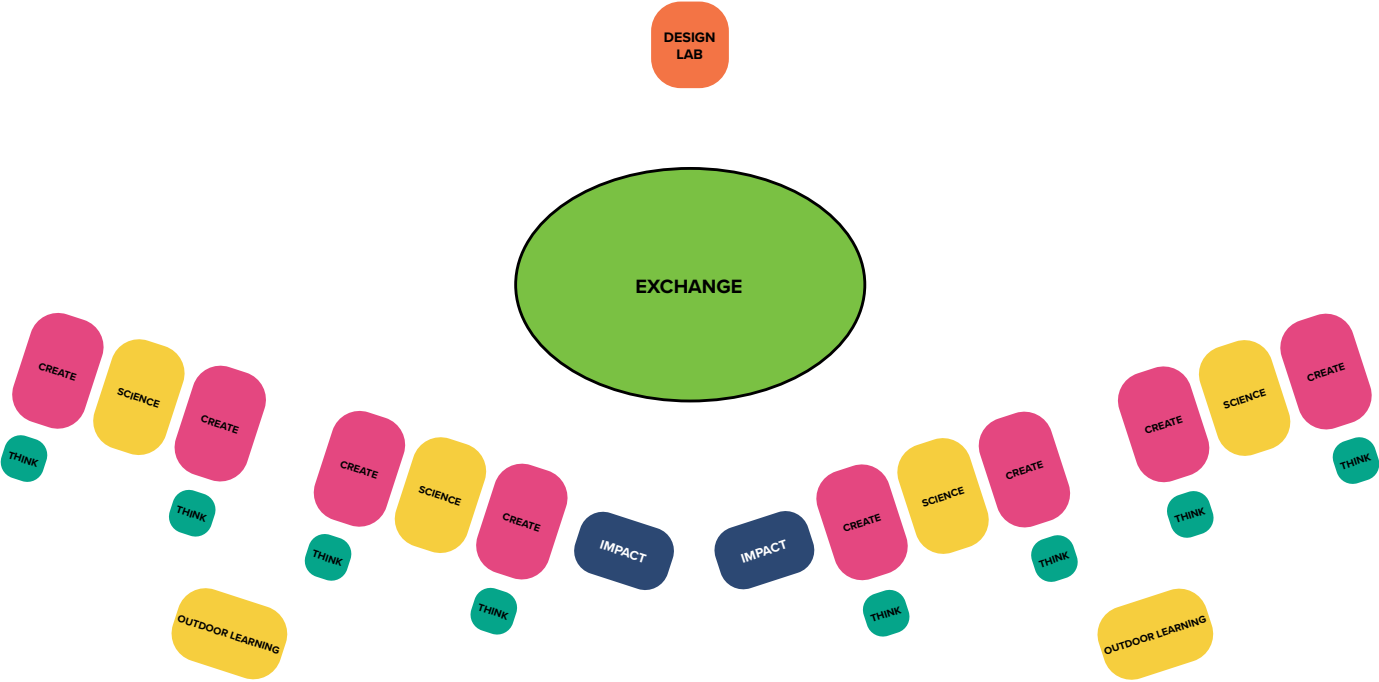
In the secondary learning environment, an academic or grade level wing is the arrangement of all spaces that are necessary to function together as a team or department, depending on the content focus and/or preferred instructional arrangement. The intentional configuration of a variety of spaces is designed to function together, to promote collaboration cross-curricular connections, and efficacy.



- Create = Classroom
- Outdoor Learning/Science
- Think = Small Collaboration Space
- Exchange = Large Collaboration Space
- Design Lab = Professional Planning Space for Teachers
- Impact = Inspiring Learning Spaces

Secondary Learning

For design direction, the following demonstrates the preferred arrangement for middle school instructional needs based on consensus.



PRELIMINARY FACILITY DETAILS

The Preliminary Facility Details outline the foundational information for Terrell ISD facilities including its type, grade levels served, and maximum student capacity. These details establish the baseline parameters for design, ensuring the facility aligns with Terrell ISD's instructional goals, program needs, and master plans.

Space Requirements for Instructional Facilities

The Texas Administrative Code requires school boards to designate either a qualitative or quantitative method of compliance for space adequacy in instructional facilities. A school district must comply with the quantitative method of compliance unless the district's board of trustees has approved a documented policy implementing innovative instructional or operational practices that utilize instructional space in a non-traditional manner.

Terrell ISD will comply with the **quantitative method** which includes:

- Maximum student enrollment must equal the maximum instructional capacity
- Must meet minimum aggregate square footage
- Stipulated space types are eligible to be used
- Libraries, cafeterias, and gymnasium are not eligible
- Increase in minimum space for middle school science laboratories

Facility Type

Comprehensive High School

Grade Levels Served

9–12

Maximum Student Enrollment

For future planning considerations, Terrell ISD's maximum student capacity is 3,000 students, which aligns with modern standards for school design and functionality.

Facility Type

Middle School

Grade Levels Served

6–8

Maximum Student Enrollment

For future planning considerations, Terrell ISD's maximum student capacity is 1,200 students, which aligns with modern standards for school design and functionality.



Facility Type

Elementary School

Grade Levels Served

K–5

Maximum Student Enrollment

For future planning considerations, Terrell ISD’s maximum student capacity is 750 students, which aligns with modern standards for school design and functionality.

TERRELL ISD | FACILITY DESCRIPTORS

SAFE & MULTIPURPOSE

Facilities that adapt to evolving teaching and learning needs.

PRIDE & COMMUNITY

Athletic and fine arts spaces that build school spirit and identity.

DYNAMIC & ENGAGING

Learning environments that foster interaction, collaboration, and creativity.

CAREER-READY

Purposefully designed academy spaces for authentic, work-based learning.

INCLUSIVE & ACCESSIBLE

Environments that are varied, purposeful, and welcoming for all students.

HANDS-ON & REAL-WORLD

Spaces that support personalized learning and experiential opportunities.



EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN ALIGNMENT

SAFETY & SECURITY

The mission is to deliver safety and security solutions that enhance and support the built environment. This involves proactively identifying and managing risk through comprehensive planning, expert insight, and ongoing education. By empowering stakeholders with knowledge and collaborating closely with local first responders, strategies are developed that prioritize protection, resilience, and improved quality of life, contributing to a safer, stronger community.

During planning discussions, safety and security emerged as foundational priorities. A committee made up of community members, students, and staff emphasized the importance of:

- Clear lines of sight from key supervision areas to major circulation and exterior zones
- Features that maintain instructional flexibility while enhancing occupant safety
- Balanced use of natural light with integrated shading to support visibility and comfort
- Intentional separation of public and private zones within the facility
- Secure, controlled entry points for visitors
- Strategic interior layouts that preserve visibility across common areas
- The ability to isolate or secure specific portions of the facility during emergencies
- Designated shelter areas for severe weather or other threats
- Perimeter fencing or barriers to create safe and defined student activity zones

