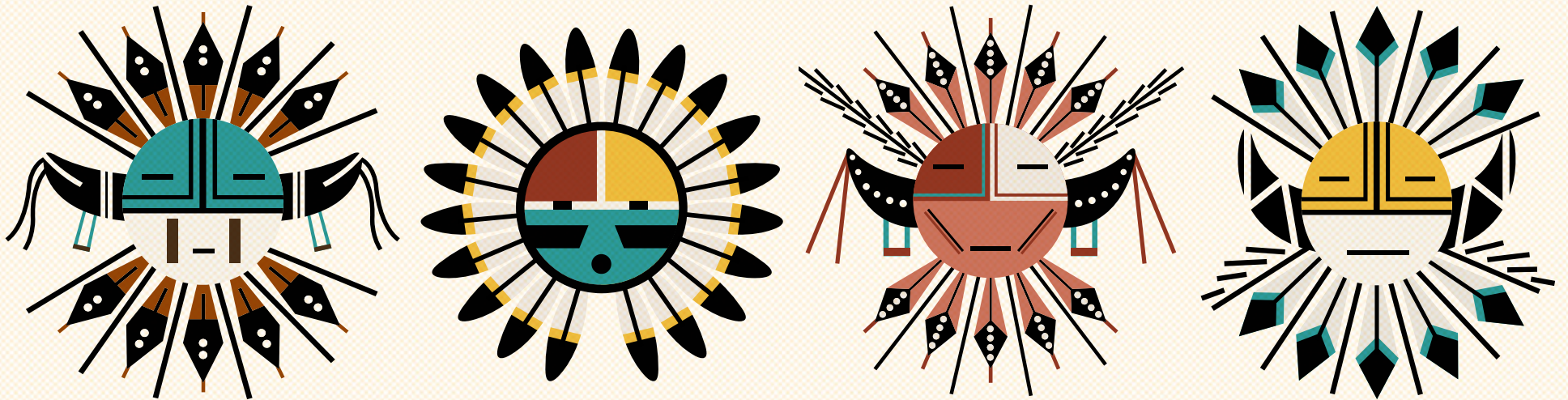


# 2013 EXHIBITION OF SCHOOL PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE



**TSÉBII'NIDZISGAI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

MONUMENT VALLEY, UTAH





SCHOOL EXTERIOR | MAIN ENTRANCE





AREA FOR FUTURE  
TEACHER HOUSING

PLAY  
FIELD

HARDSCAPE  
PLAY

PLAY  
EQUIPMENT

GRAVEL  
ACCESS  
LOOP

SERVICE  
YARD

BUS  
DROP-OFF

NTUA  
EASEMENT

VISITOR AND  
STAFF PARKING

PARENT  
DROP-OFF

GRAVEL  
ACCESS  
LOOP

NTUA UTILITY EASEMENT  
15' RT 25' LT  
TOTAL WIDTH 40'

GRAVEL  
PARKING

NTUA  
EASEMENT

NTUA UTILITY "B"

NTUA UTILITY "A"

FIRE STATION

SITE PLAN





## PLANNING PROCESS



Because the district had the desire for the new Tsébií'nidzizgai Elementary School to become an integral part of the heart of the Monument Valley community it was critical that the community be engaged in the planning process. The planning process included:

- Stakeholder Visioning
- Interviewing teachers and school personnel
- Community forum meetings
- Navajo culture committee workshops
- Oljato chapter (Similar to City Council) meeting

### Stakeholder Visioning

A stakeholder group was established to provide vision and direction for the new school and to reach consensus on the many facets of the design. The stake holder group met regularly during the planning process. During the first meeting the design team lead the stake holder group through a project visioning process. The group established the many elements of the design vision in a fun collaborative way, each following decision was tested against the initial vision statements to ensure the direction continued to meet the vision. The stakeholder group convened often throughout the design process to review the design and give direction and input.



- *Quietly respects its striking natural setting, using design features that are compatible with its environment.*
- *Welcomes and invites building users and visitors with easy accessibility.*
- *Incorporates timeless design principles that will benefit building users far into the future.*
- *Creates an interior learning environment that is as awe-inspiring as the surrounding natural environment.*
- *Focuses on students and supports their engagement in the educational process.*
- *Introduces abundant natural light into the building interior, and maximizes daylighting.*



## PLANNING PROCESS

### Environment/Sustainability

*a project that:*

- *Provides an environmentally sensitive response to its location in a desert where resources are scarce. The building should incorporate as many sustainable features as possible within the constraints of the budget.*

Members of the Stakeholder Group included:

School Board | Superintendent | Business Administrator |  
Elementary Education Director | Elementary Principal | Teachers |  
Parents | Community Leaders

### PRIMARY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

During the consensus process the stakeholder committee established the vision, goals and objectives for the school including:

**Students** | Focus on students and support their engagement in the educational process. Provide a learning environment that will enhance their educational experience.

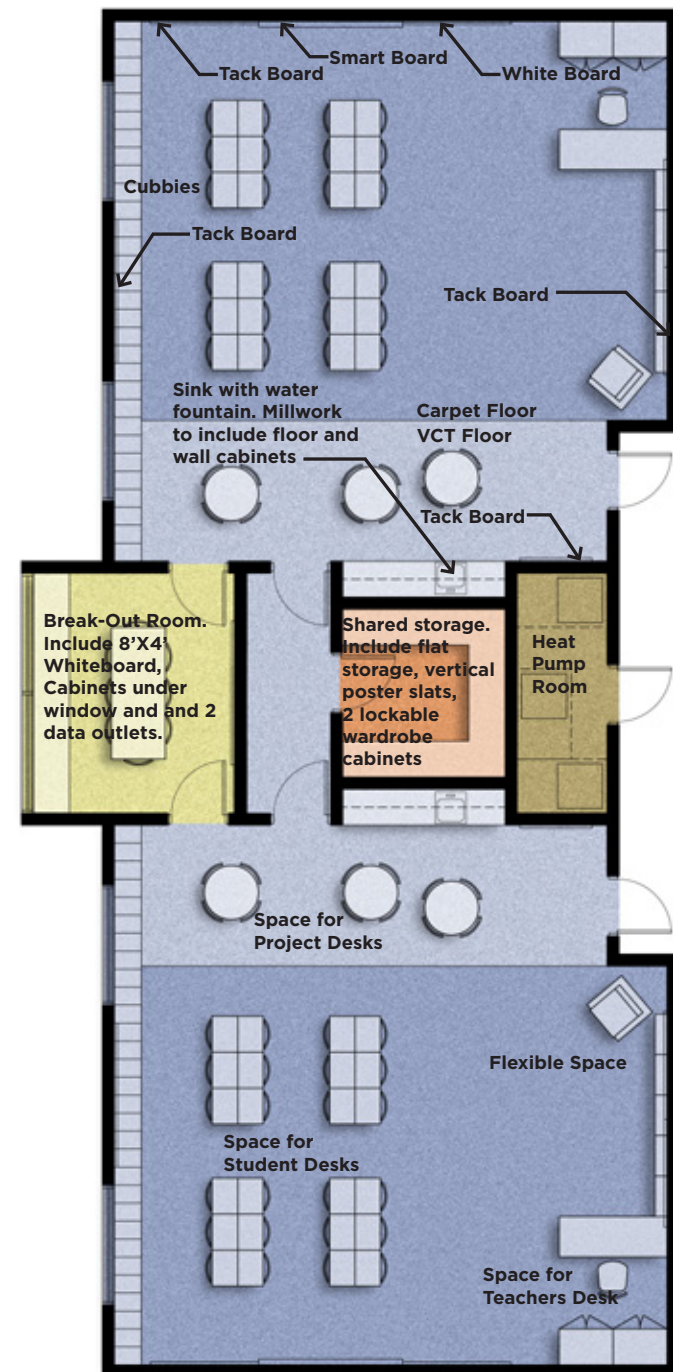
**Community** | Is a welcoming and strong educational center that becomes the heart of the community.

**Culture** | Integrates Navajo teachings into the design concept of the building, strengthening a sense of identity and pride among students and members of the community.

**Setting** | Celebrates the stunning natural setting without competing or counterfeiting, create an interior learning environment that is as awe-inspiring as the surrounding natural environment.

### PLANNING PROCESS AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

One of the most important outcomes of the planning process was the consensus that the learning environment needed to support individualized learning. Nearly all of the students are Title I learners. The stakeholder group outlined the need for a place that would support Title I interventionists, small group learning and individualized teacher instruction. The place for individualized learning needed to be shared by the two primary teaching spaces for each grade, yet they needed to be visible to the teachers who are responsible for each student throughout the day. The breakout rooms were designed to meet this specific need.



GRADE LEVEL COMMUNITY





## COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

### Community Forum Meetings

The district and design team engaged the Monument Valley Community through a series of Community Forum Meetings. Each meeting was held at the high school in Monument Valley, and each member of the community was invited through bulletins, notices to parents and the local chapter house. Early in the design process the community gathered to voice their opinion on where the school should be sited, what amenities it should have and other items. From these meetings the design team learned the desire to have the main entrance facing toward the east, and that one should circulate clockwise through the building, as one circulates through a traditional hogan. Through the community forum meetings the school district learned of the strong community desire to name the school in Navajo rather than English. They wanted it to be their school and reflect their culture.

Once concept plans and a school design were conceived they were presented to the community through a forum meeting. The community gave feedback and input which were reflected in final plans. The Navajo tradition is that each person who wishes to speak is allowed, and they are uninterrupted until they are finished. Although this sometimes led to lengthy forum meetings, the result was the design team gaining a full understanding of



COMMUNITY CELEBRATION AT GROUND BREAKING

community opinion regarding the new school. Each person who addressed the group introduced themselves in the traditional Navajo fashion by stating their mother's and father's clan, many recited recent and distant history and all helped the design team make stronger connections to Navajo culture. The result of the community forum meetings was consensus and buy in from the community at large and it generated excitement for the new school.

### Navajo Culture Committee

There is a concern with local elders that the younger generation is not connecting to their tradition and culture. They are losing their language, traditional dance, music and ceremonies. A Diné (Navajo) Culture committee was established from world leading Navajo educators and district leaders to collaborate with the design team and teach them appropriate ways to interweave the Navajo Culture into the design of the new school. Through a series of workshops the group collaborated on ways to teach and reflect the rich cultural heritage through the design of the school.

The Diné Culture Committee taught that all Navajo teachings are interrelated. They are organized according to the four directions, the sacred mountains, important mental concepts, the people around you and the life cycle. When you speak of the four directions you begin from the East, circling South, then West and finally North, leading you back to the East, this describes the sun cycle. The cycle concept is entwined throughout Navajo culture, the life cycle, the sun cycle, the cycle of the seasons, the water cycle, and many others are found throughout Navajo tradition and teachings.

Because many traditions are too sacred to reflect in a public school the committee focused on aspects that would be appropriate to display. One of the primary cultural concepts was to consider the school as a Hogan of learning. The Hogan means home, a place to return to.



## NAVAJO CULTURE COMMITTEE





## LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

### The Classroom Cluster

The primary educational environment in the school is the grade level classroom community. Careful attention was made to develop the grade level community building block to support the school pedagogy completely. The two teachers for each grade work very closely together, they develop lesson plans together, intermingle their classes and coordinate throughout each day. With the small class sizes and ample classrooms, the teachers have the flexibility to collaborate on project based learning. What the students needed most was a place for quiet, individual and small group tutoring and a place to work with Title I interventionists.

The classroom community was designed to meet the needs of the students and teachers. The hub of the community is the shared intervention room. The intervention room is a break-out space that is shared between the two grade level classrooms. This provides the opportunity for an interventionist to tutor students from both classrooms together. When not used by interventionists the space is used for small group activities, quiet individual learning, conferencing and teacher collaboration. The walls between the intervention room and the classrooms are glass so teachers can always oversee the students they are responsible for.

“The intervention rooms are wonderful and are used daily for multiple purposes.”  
-Amy Kensley, Teacher



INTERVENTION BREAK OUT ROOM



### Diné (Navajo) Heritage and Language Classroom Hogan

The heart of the Navajo cultural education takes place in the heritage and language classroom. It is designed as a contemporary eight-sided hogan. It is the place where the students learn the language, dance, music, and art of the Navajo. In the classroom the four directions are indicated by icons of the four sacred mountains, a rainbow rings the room with an opening at the east doorway, and the ceiling is constructed with the traditional cedar building material. The heritage and language classroom is a learning laboratory where the students connect to the tradition and culture of the Navajo people.

“This building gives support to the Navajos way of life, beliefs and symbols. The structure of the building in every way supports the Navajo peoples way of living. It’s like a monument added to all the other monuments.”

-Clayton Long, Director Bilingual Education



### Gymnasium

The gymnasium for the school is sized to serve as the auxiliary gym to the nearby high school. It also provides needed space for the community to use for gatherings, cultural celebrations and their traditional shoe game. The interwoven design of the acoustic wall panels are inspired from Navajo basket weaving, and the design in the closed bleachers is a stylized Navajo blanket pattern.



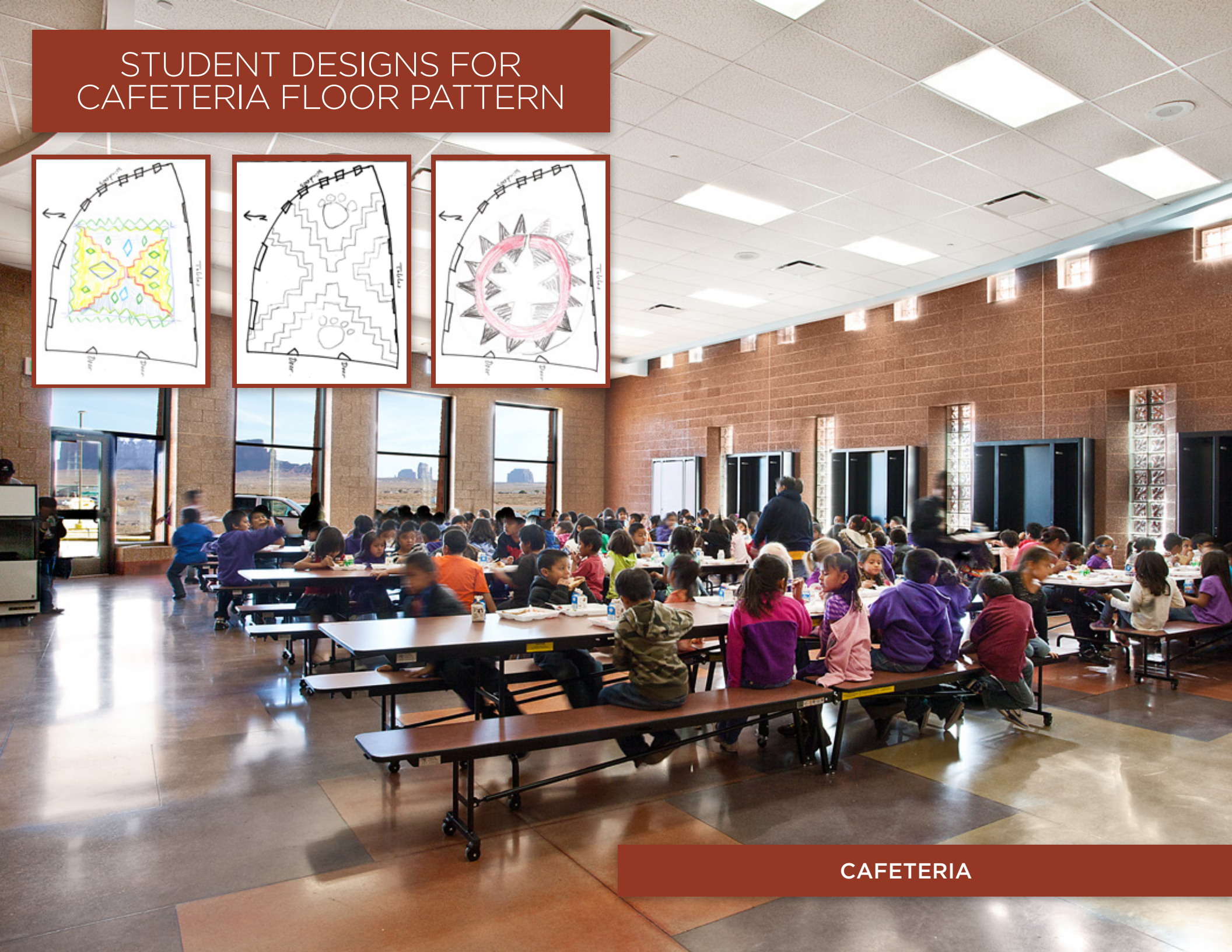
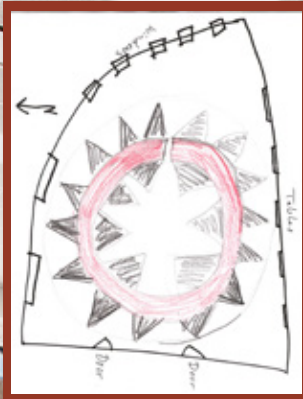
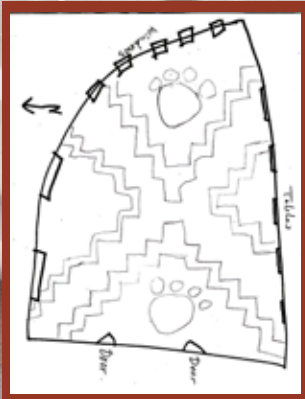
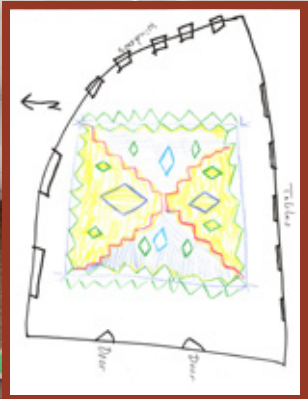




HERITAGE AND LANGUAGE HOGAN



# STUDENT DESIGNS FOR CAFETERIA FLOOR PATTERN



CAFETERIA





## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

### Site

Tsébiin'idzizgai Elementary School is located in remote Monument Valley, Utah. Monument Valley is a region of the Colorado Plateau that is characterized by a red sand and sage desert with sandstone formations and towering buttes. The beauty of Monument Valley is world renowned, as such, nearly 500,000 tourists pass by the site each year. To protect the students from tourist traffic the public front of the school faces toward highway 163. The outdoor play and learning activities take place privately behind the school, out of view of visitors. The lawn area on the site is limited to a play field to help the facility fit into the surroundings by practicing xeriscaping principles. Aside from student play, lawn is an unnecessary luxury in the desert. The classroom wings enclose an outdoor learning and play plaza, the wings help create shelter from the hot sun, blustery wind and the occasional desert sandstorm.

### School Plan

The Tsébiin'idzizgai Elementary School plan is organized to be a Hogan of Learning. On the first day of kindergarten, students enter the East door and move toward the South where the Kindergarten - 3rd grades are located. They play toward the west and continue their learning cycle with 4-6 grades located toward the West and north. Upon finishing their elementary school experience a student will leave through the east door, completing their cycle.



## GREATER SITE ENVIRONMENT





### Entry rotunda

The entry rotunda is the heart of the school. It is a formal Hogan designed to celebrate Navajo culture. The floor of the entry rotunda is a Navajo wedding basket pattern created in stained polished concrete. The concrete floors are made from aggregate extracted from the earth and are a reminder of the traditional dirt floor in a Hogan. The four cardinal points of the compass are highlighted through windows which reveal the sky, custom wall scone designs and traditional colors in painted niches and display areas. There are many places to display cultural elements in the rotunda. Art niches' celebrate local artists with art that represents the bringing together of traditional and modern teaching. The custom wall scone designs represent, Mother Earth, Father Sky, life, health, food, spirituality, and livelihood. A skylight in the center of the rotunda reveals the sky and hearkens to the opening in the center of a traditional hogan. The rotunda is the heart of many important school functions, it is the gateway to the Heritage and Language Classroom, Cafeteria, Media center and main office.

### Cafeteria

The cafeteria has picture windows oriented toward the East. In addition to revealing a view of the desert buttes and pinnacles that made the region famous, the East facing windows allow the many students who eat breakfast at the school to enjoy the meaningful sun rise welcoming each new day. The floor pattern in the cafeteria is stained concrete with a stylized Navajo rug design inspired by student designs. The cougar cub (school mascot) footprints in the corridors were also student ideas. The accent colors on the walls, ceilings and in the mill-work were all determined by the Navajo Culture committee to remind students of cultural ideas.

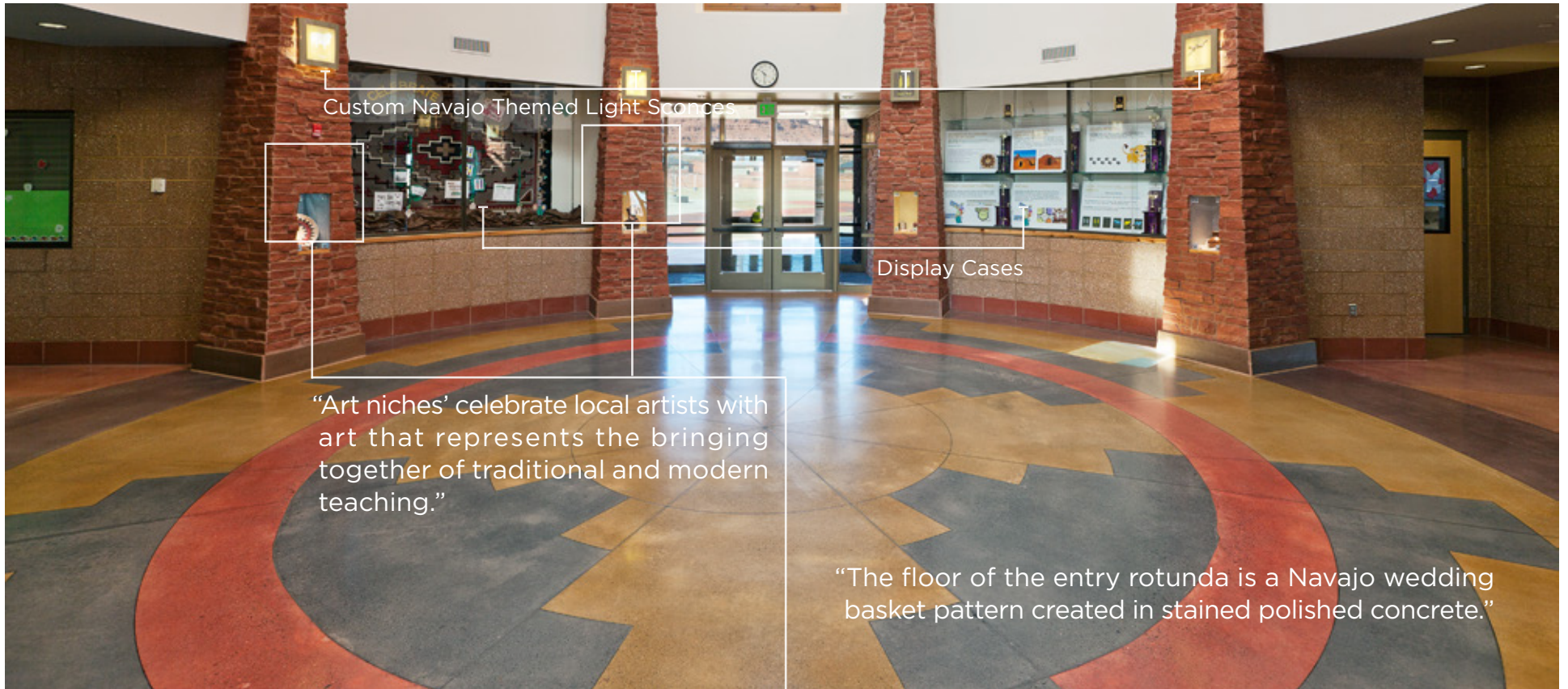
### Aesthetic

The material and massing of Tsébií'nidziszgai Elementary School are designed to reflect the fins and buttes in the region. The colors were carefully selected to compliment the sandstone desert environment. The school does not compete with or mimic the majesty of the adjacent landscape, rather it compliments it by its simplicity and desert appropriate design.



ENTRY ROTUNDA





Custom Navajo Themed Light Sconces

Display Cases

"Art niches' celebrate local artists with art that represents the bringing together of traditional and modern teaching."

"The floor of the entry rotunda is a Navajo wedding basket pattern created in stained polished concrete."



CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN THE ENTRY







The cultural features have really added a supportive element for students. They are a lot more curious about their heritage, and are showing more cultural pride in themselves instead of trying to be like “everyone else.”

-Amy Kensley, Teacher



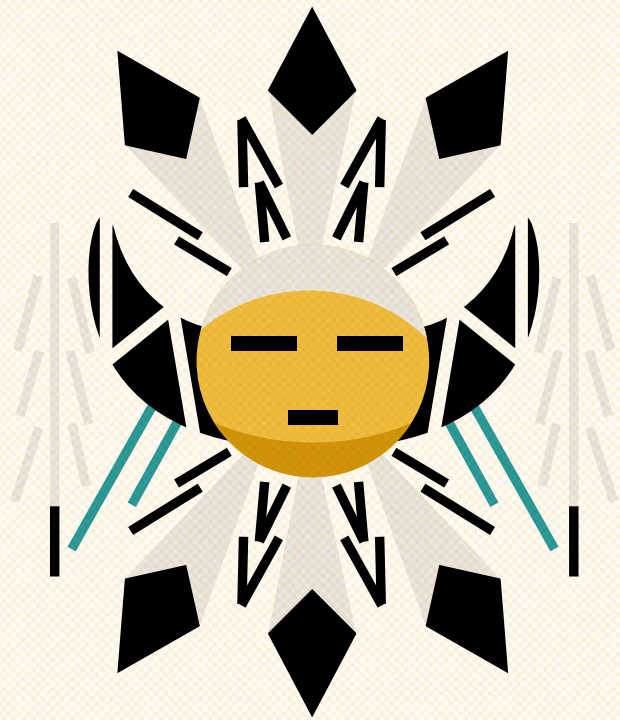
FRONT OF SCHOOL





DESERT SETTING OF MONUMENT VALLEY





## EXHIBITION OF SCHOOL PLANNING & ARCHITECTURE PROJECT DATA

SUBMITTING FIRM	MHTN ARCHITECTS, INC.
Project Role	Architects
Project Contact	Brian Parker
Title	Principal Designer
Address	420 E. South Temple, Suite 100
City, State or Province, Country	Salt Lake City, Utah 84111, United States
Phone	801.326.3251

CONSTRUCTION FIRM	HOGAN / TRIHURST JOINT VENTURE
Project Role	Construction Manager/General Contractor
Project Contact	J.D. Forbush
Title	Project Manager
Address	940 North 1250 West
City, State or Province, Country	Centerville, Utah 84014, United States
Phone	801.951.7000



## EXHIBITION OF SCHOOL PLANNING & ARCHITECTURE PROJECT DETAILS



Project Name	Tsébii'nidzsigai Elementary School
City	Monument Valley
State	Utah
District Name	San Juan County School District
Supt/President	Dr. Douglas Wright, Superintendent
Occupancy Date	Sept 01, 2011
Grades Housed	Pre-K through 6th grade

Capacity (Students)	Capacity 375 students
Site Size (Acres)	7.6 acres
Gross Area (Sq.ft.)	51,800 sf
Per Occupant (pupil)	138 sf per pupil
Gross/net please indicate	1.12

Design and Build?	No
If yes, Total Cost:	
Includes	Architecture, Space Planning, Programming, Interior Design, Landscape Design

If no,	CM/GC Delivery
Site Development	\$1,842
Building Construction	\$7,282,400
Fixed Equipment	N.I.C.
Teacher Housing Infrastructure & Water Tank	\$735,200

Total	\$9,860,000
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