

Design Space 2016/2017

Purpose and Guiding Principles



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Dr. Robert Pilkington

The original 2012 charter application for VGV called for three educational spaces, each of distinct design and function. The Learning Centers are our large computer labs meant for individual and whole or large group e-learning. The Workshop Spaces are modest classrooms designed for small group instruction of no more than twelve. The third area for learning was the Design Space (DS). This specific space is an informal learning area meant for group and project based work of a dissimilar nature to what is found in either the LC or Workshop.

The original charter had a strong research based argument for the creation of informal learning spaces which are akin to a “Starbucks” for students (albeit sans java and pastry!). The idea is simple; future ready students in our “adult work environment for kids” also need to be facile in their ability to work in small groups and in environments which are non-traditional in order to create deliverables which inform, entertain, and are portfolio worthy artifacts.

Since 2012 we have seen the rise of the “maker space” and “co-working space” movements. At VGV our Design Space has grown in concept to include the ability to perform maker space “work bench type activities” as well as being positioned to potentially become open to the “public” as an inexpensive alternative to established co-working spaces proliferating in Providence, RI. In 2015/16 we introduced the Design Space concept and were successful in introducing the term to our school culture. Last year was a simple precursor but it set us up to execute a first class program which will serve so many needs on a school-wide basis. The Design Space should become an emblem of the well roundedness of our e-learning culture.

Our Design Space has the following for equipment:

- ✓ Fifteen Acer 15.6 inch Chromebooks
- ✓ One networked photocopier and 3D printer
- ✓ Cannon Rebel digital SLR with numerous lenses and peripherals
- ✓ Green screen kit with umbrella lights
- ✓ Mac mini with Mac monitor for iMovie capability
- ✓ Furniture (tables and chairs) of a movable and flexible nature
- ✓ Pods of conversational furniture for informal group work
- ✓ Tools and a tool chest (Craftsman red) plus a public address system
- ✓ IBM laptop for manipulation of the school’s digital signage
- ✓ Work bench and storage for maker space and competitive drone racing program
- ✓ Four Chromebooks to loan to VGV students for a night at a time

The following are the guiding principles for community use of this element of charter fulfillment.

- ✓ The Design Space teacher is a core content teacher with a new area of specialization.
- ✓ The Design Space is to be visited by all students on a frequent and routine basis; students will cycle through the DS and be assigned to go the DS multiple times per year.
- ✓ The length of the cycle can range from part of a day to multiple days; the Design Space teacher will work in conjunction with teachers and teacher leaders to work out schedules.
- ✓ Students may be grouped by Workshop, Houses or interests and the groupings will shift in accordance with student age and team desire. But, a solid schedule must transpire.
- ✓ The Design Space is not a place where students go for a respite.
- ✓ Design Space is part of our academic program and students will be graded by their DS teacher and those grades will appear on Report Cards and have credit value.
- ✓ Special and high profile courses such as TealsK12 will operate out of the DS.
- ✓ The Design Space is a value added piece of our program and provides for charter fulfillment.