



May 15, 2018

To: Dr. Mike Riggle  
From: Dr. Rosanne Williamson  
Mr. Ryan Bretag  
Re: Learning Space Update: Testing Phase Results

### **Introduction**

Our Learning Space Research Team (Associate Principals for Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Supervisors of English, Math (GBN), Social Studies, Special Education (GBS), World Language and eighteen teachers from respective departments) completed the testing of classroom prototypes as part of our iterative process. This yielded necessary data from students and teachers to refine our prototypes in order to maximize the impact of these spaces on learning, teaching, and well-being. In addition, the testing provided insights into professional development (PD) needs for scaling to all teachers.

### **Test Phase Results**

Students and teachers were administered a survey (pre-occupancy) based upon their experiences in traditional classrooms prior to the installation of our prototype active learning classrooms. Students took the same survey (post-occupancy) several weeks after experiencing these new active learning classroom. The quantitative and qualitative results highlight the constructive impact that the active learning classroom has had on movement, communication, creative activities, and collaborative learning within the classrooms at Glenbrook North and South High Schools. In the active learning classroom survey, students self reported that moving furniture to support their learning styles, being more creative, and using classroom tools to think through ideas increased significantly from the traditional classroom to the prototype designs.

Most notably, physical environment indicators differed significantly in the pre-/post-survey between active learning classrooms and traditional classrooms. Students reported the following activities 'often' or 'always' (multiple/week/day) happened far more frequently than students reported in the traditional classroom survey:

- Moving the furniture into new classroom layouts to support learning: 28% traditional classroom, 56% active learning classroom (increase of 103%)
- Using classroom tools to think through ideas: 34% traditional classroom, 56% active learning classroom (increase of 63%)
- Moving in chair during class: 47% traditional classroom, 75% active learning classroom (increase of 58%)

- Using classroom tools to communicate: 43% traditional classroom, 65% active learning classroom (increase of 50%)
- Moving to work with others: 60% traditional classroom, 71% active learning classroom (increase of 18%)

In direct questioning about the perceived effect of the classroom, more students in the active learning classroom survey reported that the environment had a 'positive' or 'very positive' effect on the following activities:

- Be Creative: 44% traditional classroom, 77% active learning classroom (increase of 76%)
- Motivated to learn: 46% traditional classroom, 73% active learning classroom (increase of 59%)
- Connect with classmates: 57% traditional classroom, 85% active learning classroom (increase of 48%)
- Collaborate with classmates: 65% traditional classroom, 87% active learning classroom (increase of 35%)
- Facilitate problem solving: 52% traditional classroom, 70% active learning classroom (increase of 34%)
- Communicate work/ideas: 63% traditional classroom, 82% active learning classroom (increase of 30%)

## **Background**

Our journey in learning spaces began in 2015-2016 exploring the "What" through various manufacturers of furniture. This provided us a great opportunity to fail forward and reframe the conversation around the "Why" (purpose and vision) needed to design meaningful learning spaces. During the 2016-2017 academic year, we took the lessons learned from the previous year and explored the manufacturer that anecdotally emerged as the leader in the "what". Our interest in working with this manufacturer was specific to the unique professional development they offered to get at the "why" related to active learning and well-being.

Beginning in the summer of 2017-2018, we immersed ourselves in understanding the breadth and depth of space design leading with "why". This led to the formation of a learning space team of teachers, instructional supervisors, and instructional leaders. Using Design Thinking as the driving process, this group immersed in the study and design of spaces:

1. Empathy and discovery work around the student experience. This led to active learning pedagogical drivers and well-being dimensions developed by teachers that guided designers and researchers in the development of our prototype classrooms.
2. Immersive two-day exploration of human-centric environments: the intersection of wellness, people, space, and learning. This was hosted by some of the leading researchers and thinkers in neuroscience, creativity, psychology, design thinking, active learning, and wellness
3. Continued empathy building and ideation work as a team and with students leading to three rounds of prototyping
4. Testing phase of three prototypes leading to final adjustments to designs for implementation

### *Active Learning Pedagogical Drivers (as referenced in number 1)*

- Supports teachers in student-centric environments that reflect how students want to learn
- Encourages peer-to-peer teaching and learning

- Provides for student and faculty comfort
- Inspires the free exchange of ideas
- Supports diverse learning styles

*Well-being Dimensions (as referenced in number 1)*

- Optimism - fostering creativity and innovation
- Mindfulness - fully engaged and aware
- Authenticity - being one's most real, true self
- Belonging - connecting to others
- Meaning - a sense of purpose
- Vitality - get-up-and-go

**Recap of Activities**

- June 2017 - I.S.'s and other administrators attend Steelcase University PD sessions
- September 2017 - Teachers attend Steelcase University PD sessions
- October 2017 - Leadership team validated teacher feedback to ensure represented in first prototypes
- October 2017 - Teachers and I.S.'s debriefed Steelcase Visit and participated in Round 1 Design Sprints
- November 2017 - Leadership team validated that teacher thematic feedback was included in Round 2 prototypes
- December 2017 - Teachers and I.S.'s participate in Round 2 Design Sprints & finalize prototypes for furniture
  - Identification of PD needs based upon teacher feedback
- December 2017 - Meetings by department with I.S.'s, teachers & associate principals to share specific classroom prototypes for furniture and discuss and confirm AV
- January-February 2018 - Professional development designed and testing process finalized
- March 2018 - Prototypes installed and Testing Phase began
- April 2018 - Ongoing professional development and review of spaces
- May 2018 - Data collected and Testing Phase completed
- May/June 2018 - Refinement of Prototypes