

A wide-angle photograph of a school playground. In the foreground, two men stand on a light-colored concrete path. The man on the left, wearing a light blue shirt and khaki pants, is pointing towards a group of children in the distance. The man on the right, wearing a white shirt and dark pants, is looking in the same direction. The playground area is a mix of dark asphalt and light-colored mulch. Numerous children in various colored clothing are scattered across the playground, some running and others standing in small groups. In the background, there are dense green trees and a clear blue sky. A green rectangular box is visible in the top left corner of the image.

Report & Recommendations for the San Carlos School District

Arundel Elementary School Upper Playground Redesign

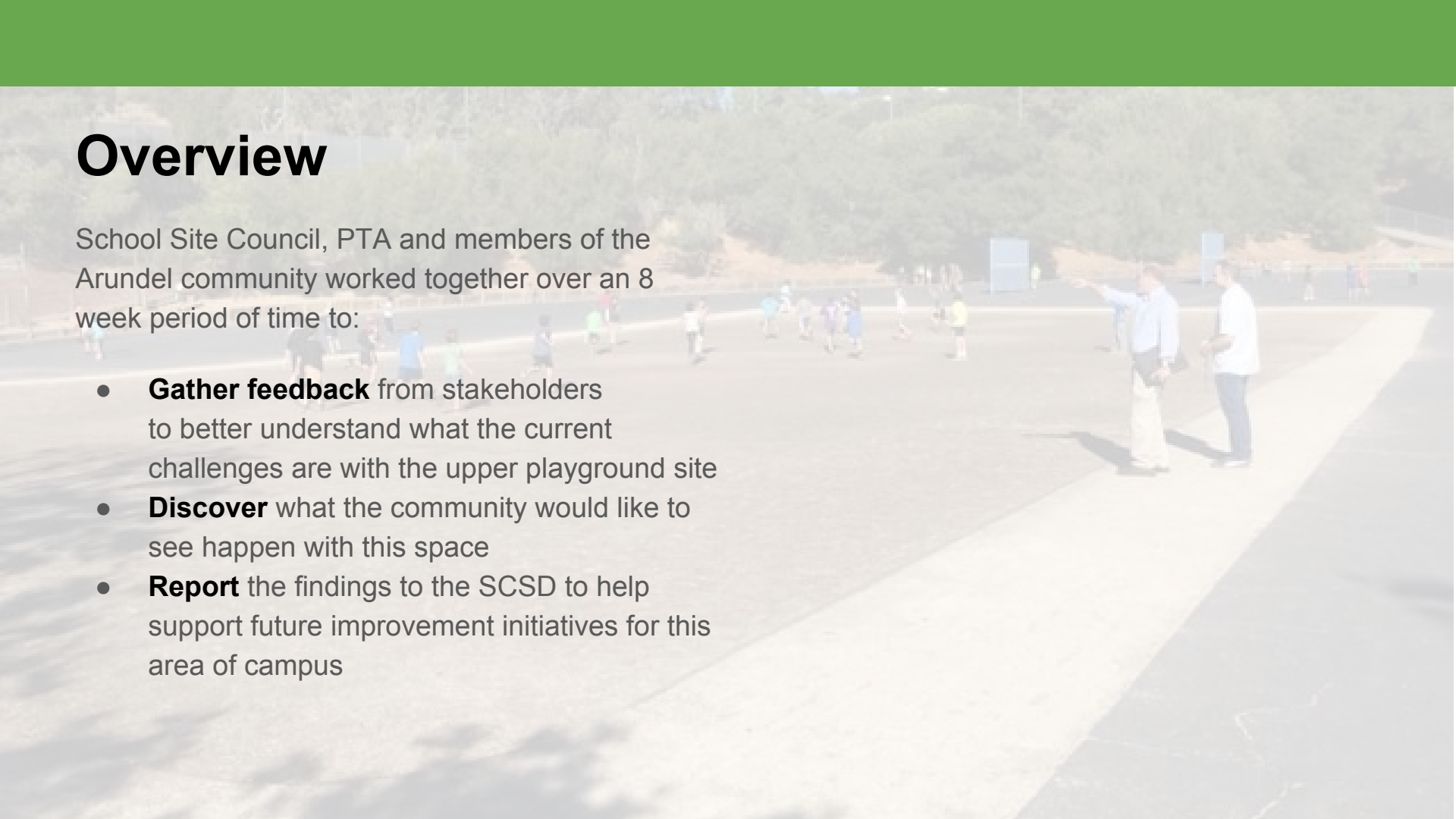
A human-centered, project-based approach

10.14.15 – 12.17.15

Overview

School Site Council, PTA and members of the Arundel community worked together over an 8 week period of time to:

- **Gather feedback** from stakeholders to better understand what the current challenges are with the upper playground site
- **Discover** what the community would like to see happen with this space
- **Report** the findings to the SCSD to help support future improvement initiatives for this area of campus



Overview: Site

Located on the upper playground at Arundel

- 9,936 sq ft (grass/dirt)
- 1,768 sq ft (crumbly path)
- **11,704 total sq ft**
- **Main play area for over half the student body (<250 children)**



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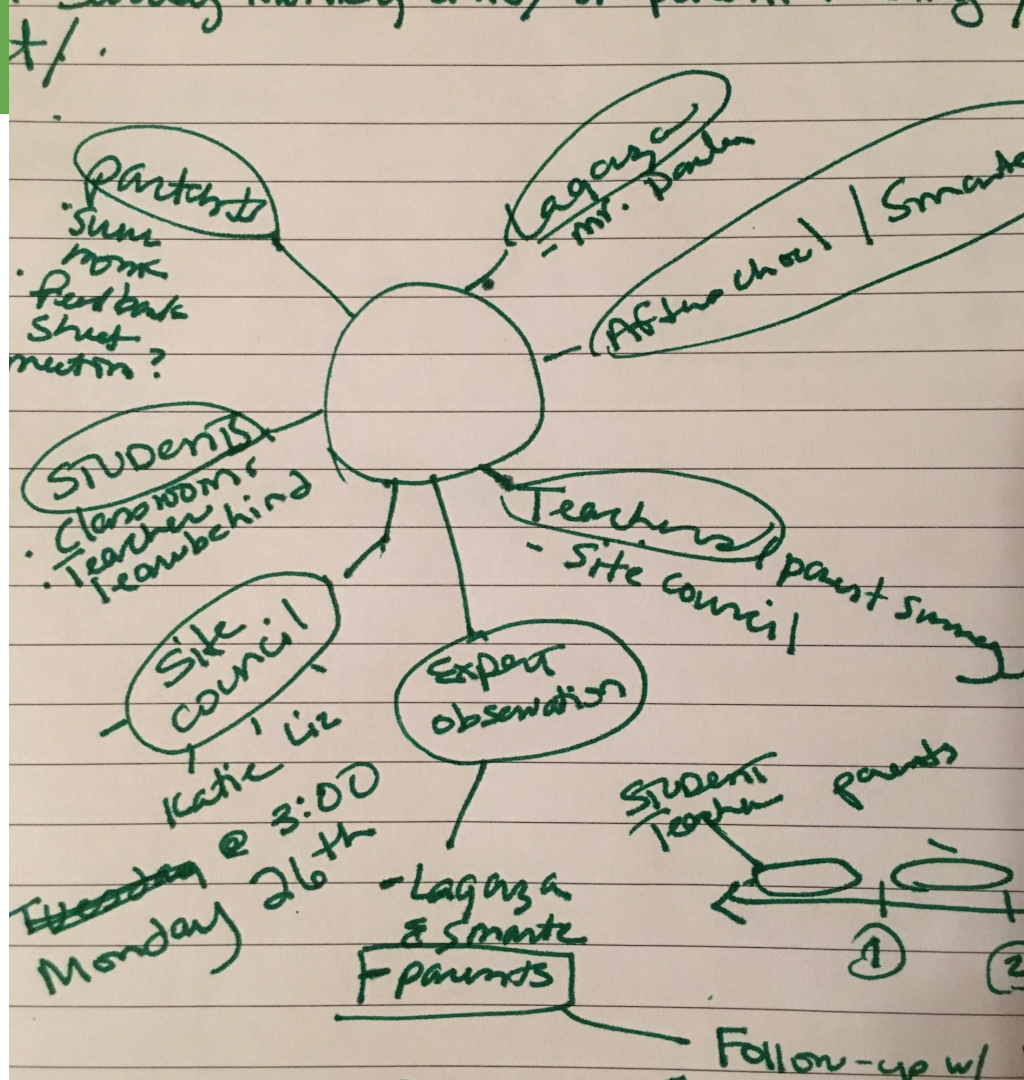


“Dirt
Patch”

Gather Feedback

Our first task was to **identify the key stakeholders** for the project. The “who” we should be listening to and speaking with. The team came up with the following:

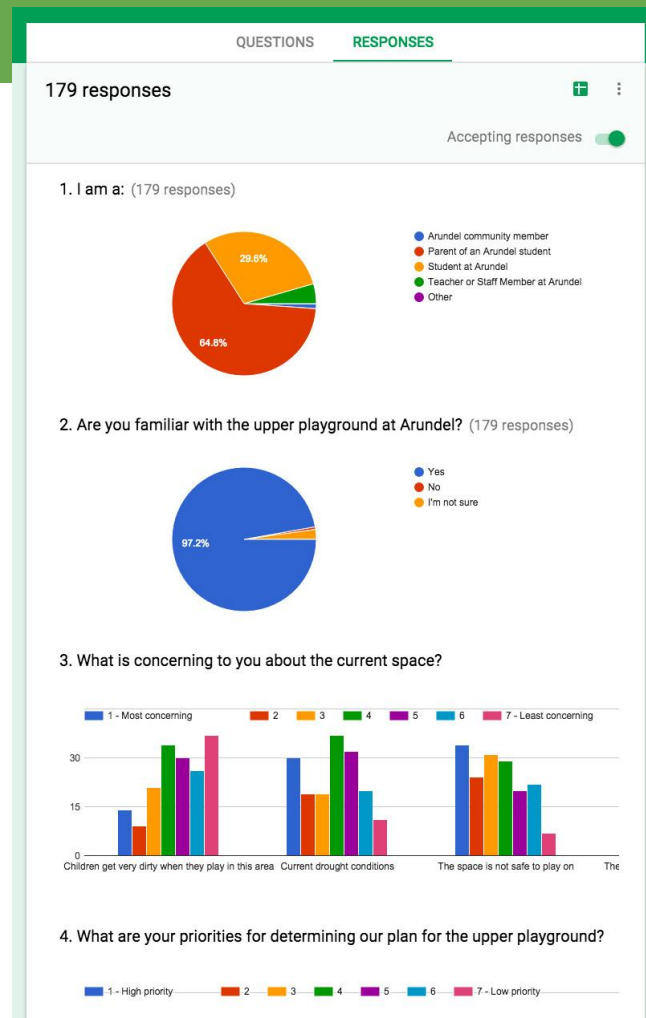
1. Students
2. Teachers
3. Parents
4. Legarza
5. After School/Smart-E
6. Site experts



Gather Feedback

Next, we took a mixed-methods approach using **interviews**, **observations** and a **survey** to gather insights from our stakeholders.

1. Students
2. Teachers
3. Parents
4. Legarza
5. After School/Smart-E
6. Site experts



Gather Feedback

Interviews

Mr. Dawley and the team visited most of the **22 classrooms at Arundel** to **interview students and teachers**.

Interview protocol and questions were developed ahead of time by School Site Council.



Interviews

“No one plays kickball, just soccer or football.”

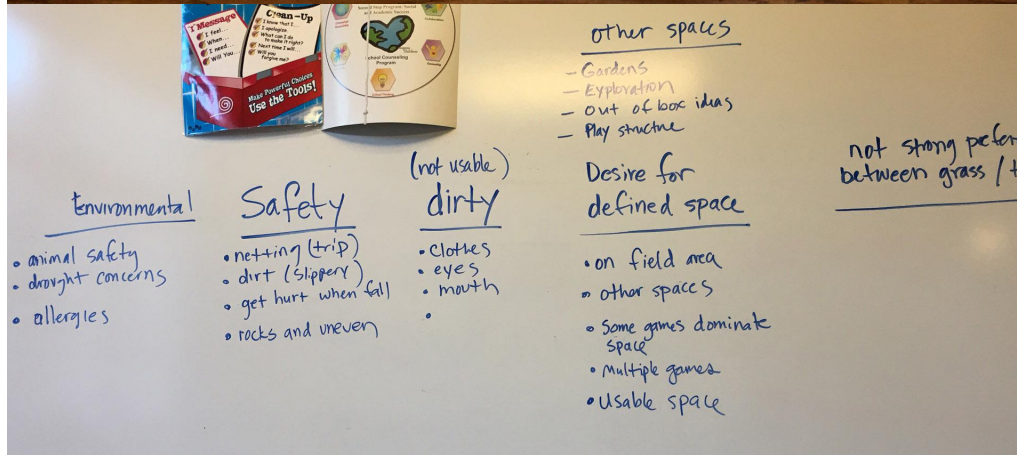
*"The netting is hard to play on
and bad for the birds."*

- 3rd grade student, male

Classroom Visit Schedule									
File	Edit	View	Insert	Format	Data	Tools	Add-ons	Help	Last edit was made 6 days ago by Katie Stamos
Visit Time									
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H		
Visit Time	Teacher name	Classroom #	Grade Level	Visit Date	Team Members Participating in the Visit?	Main take aways from the visit?	Other Notes		
10:35 AM	Mrs. Garbo	21	3	Monday Oct 26	Mr Dawley, Hazel, Katie & Joy	1. Students expressed that the field is unsafe. 2. Students expressed that field is dirty. 3. Students were evenly split between grass and turf. 4. Desire for designated purposes for field. 5. Driving force in any decision is concern about the interaction with nature and a desire to be respectful of our environment.	- Field is unusable when it turns into a lake after rain. - Huge interest in adding a volleyball net. - Students wanted to ensure whatever we do is done with respect to the natural environment.		
11:15 AM	Mrs. Moyer	2	1	Monday Oct 26	Mr. Dawley, Katie & Joy	1. Students want a soft surface. No concrete. 2. Students want to use the space for multiple purposes. 3. Desire for meaningful gathering place. 4. Students split evenly between turf and grass. 5. Students love being included in the process.	- Students were very concerned about the risk of injury. - Students don't like getting dirty on this field. - Re: turf vs. grass, both sides have risk of allergies.		
11:45 AM	Mrs. Reitz	19	3	Monday Oct 26	Mr. Dawley, Katie & Joy	1. Concerned about injury; very aware field is unsafe. 2. Students dislike getting dirty on the field, so they avoid it. 3. Evenly split between turf and grass. 4. Students would like to make the usable space bigger. 5. Students are very eager to give input.	- In addition to safety concerns, also pointed out that dirt gets in their eyes. - Environmental concerns are #1 determinant for grass vs. field issue. One student was concerned that birds are getting stuck in the mesh.		
12:45AM (after lunch)	Mrs. Ettari	6	K	Monday Oct 26	Mr. Dawley & Joy	1. Concerned about nature: "bird traps" on the field 2. Safety: On windy days the dirt gets into their eyes, so they avoid it the field. 3. Interested in more playground space. 4. Students would also be interested in flowers or keeping the space as dirt to ride their bikes on outside of school 5. Students were interested in having the field turned back into grass (no preference between turf and grass).	- Students also avoided the field when it was muddy so they don't get dirty - Having the space separated with "lines" would help with being able to have more than one activity happening at a time.		
8:45 AM	Mrs. Frey	20	3	Tuesday, Oct 27	Mr. Dawley & Katie	1. Students are very aware that this patch is dangerous. 2. Students feel this area is very dirty. 3. Students are concerned about animals' well-being. 4. Students are evenly split between turf and grass. 5. Students strongly do not want concrete.	- Students refer to this as the "dirt patch." - One student had an idea to have half turf, half grass. - One student brought up grass allergies. - Don't like that animals get tangled in the nets.		
9:00	Mrs. Higginbotham	5	1	Tuesday, Oct 27	Mr. Dawley & Katie	1. Students want something soft. 2. Dirt is getting ton students' shoes, eyes, and clothes. 3. Aware of danger of falling on hard surface; no concrete. 4. Split between turf and grass. 5. Very eager to give input, understood that this is an inclusive process.	- Students consistently expressed that at this age, they really like jungle gyms with bars, slides, etc. This is an informative point for when we discuss any reconfigurations for the P-3 school.		
9:30 AM	Mrs. Selvy	1	K	Tuesday, Oct 27	Mr. Dawley & Katie	1. Students are aware that this "bumpy" area is dangerous. 2. Students don't like that dirt gets in their eyes. 3. Students would love to see more gardens on campus. 4. Evenly split between turf and grass; no strong opinions. 5. Great participation; glad to be involved in process!	- Repeatedly, the connection to nature popped up. One student in particular said grass would be more inviting to bees.		
9:45 AM	Mrs. Mountanos	17	4	Tuesday, Oct 27	Mr. Dawley & Katie	1. Netting is a tripping hazard, creates litter, harms wildlife. 2. Learned toward turf over grass. 3. Environmental concerns drove decisions. 4. Expressed wish that this area was bigger.	- Another request for designated purposes for different areas on the playground. - No one wants concrete, and 2-3 out of 25 wanted rubberized surface.		

Interviews

- **Current space concerns**
 - Safety
 - The environment
 - usability of the space “as is”
- **Wish list for future changes**
 - Define the space better
 - grass/turf – no preference
 - other ideas for the space



Discover

Observations

The team visited the area at different times of the day to see who was using the field, how it was being used and to see if there were any issues. The top takeaways from those sessions include:

- **Gender preferences**
- **Favorable activities**
- **Exclusions**
- **Safety**

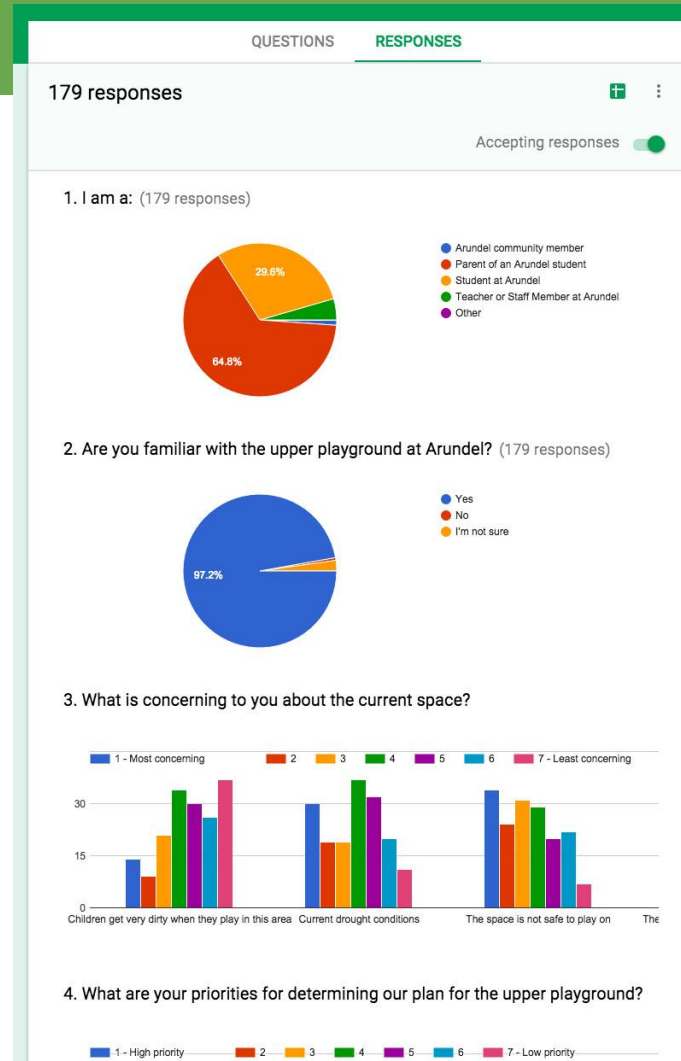


Gather Feedback

Survey

The team created a simple six question survey that was sent out to the larger Arundel community. **This allows parents, students, after school groups and others to contribute** to the conversation as well.

- **179 responses total**
 - 65% parents
 - 30% upper grade students
 - 5% staff & community members
 - 97% were familiar with the area



Discover

Survey

When asked about what is “**concerning to you about the current space**” over half the respondents said the area was unsafe to play on and not kid friendly.

- **Unsafe to play on 58%**
- **Not kid friendly 56%**
 - Current drought condition 37%
 - Children getting dirty 24%

*“We need to think bigger than just the dirt patch. **The upper playground students are in desperate need of safe areas to run. Grass or turf. And it should be big enough for organized games, and to use on weekends for San Carlos sports teams.**”*

- survey respondent

Discover

Survey

In terms of “**priorities for determining a plan for the space**” student safety was the top priority.

- **75% Student Safety**
- **64% Creating safe & effective learning space**
 - 45% Reduction of dust
 - 42% Water conservation
 - 22% Aesthetics
 - 16% Keeping costs low

“I do care about water conservation, but a grassy area for kids to run around would benefits their healthy growth tremendously.”

- survey respondent

Discover

Survey

In terms of “**what to do with the space**” the majority of respondents wanted the area converted to turf.

- **67% Convert the area to turf**
 - 41% Replace with rubberized playground surface
 - 38% Reseed the area with grass
 - 37% Create a place for sitting with trees
 - 30% Create another type of learning space that has reduced grass or no grass or turf
 - 18% Create a garden
 - 8% Do nothing
 - 6% Cover the area with asphalt

“A turf field would be ideal so kids don't have to play soccer or football at recess on asphalt or a patch of dirt.”

- survey respondent

Report

To help support future improvement initiatives for this area of campus we recommend the following:

- **Short-term**
 - Address existing drainage issues and put down turf
 - Include in your thinking ways of differentiating the space so that more than one game or activity can happen at a time
 - Address the track around the field with a rubberized material



Report

To help support future improvement initiatives for this area of campus we recommend the following:

- **Long-term**
 - Consider including the time and resources to create an overall design plan for the entire upper playground space that includes shade and additional defined areas for different activities



Before



After

“The kids need a place to play sports, maybe multiple sports. Now there are way too many kids fighting to play football vs soccer and the number of kids per game is too large. Separately, a quiet shady place for games or reading would be nice.”

- survey respondent



Thank you