



## Creating a Space for Us

### Grade 1/2 (Smithville)

We were invited by Mr. Huinink to look at the plans for our schools and give some advice. We are so excited about what is going to happen, and do have some ideas. We hope that you see how excited we are to be a part of this project!

As a grade 1/2 class, we were asked to solve a problem with the architecture drawings. Some of the hallways, bathrooms, doors and storage were not put in the best place to keep all of us safe during the time we go out and come back in for recess, especially kindergarten students. Together, our class came up with new drawings for the rooms and where they would go. We were able to present them to Mr. Huinink to explain why we think they would work better than what is on the architecture drawing.

We also shared what we were learning about what school is for, and how a school building can help that. We did some research about other schools and what worked really well for them, and made suggestions to make our school even better for learning.

Transcribed from interviews from the grade 1/2 class.



## What is a Learning Commons?

### Grades 5 & 6 (Smithville)

Our class was asked about some of the design of our school building. One of our guiding questions we tried to answer was “does our space encourage us to participate in active learning? Are we able to move around while we learn and work in groups? Do the rooms where students learn encourage us to work together and dig deeper into our learning?”

We have been investigating the idea of a ‘Learning Commons’: A Learning Commons is different from a library or computer lab. It is not just a place to take out books or use the computers, it is a space where we have choice to move around and work in groups, and also seating so we can work separate from each other. It is a great space to create, learn and collaborate!

We are talking to our librarian and other classes and teachers to see what will work.

Written by Olivia.

“Our class did a project with the SK class on Black History Month, and it would have been really helpful to have a Learning Commons to work on that project together. Students can work in groups or individually, and groups can collaborate on projects. The space becomes more comfortable, where work can be done. Right now we need to sit in the hallways or foyer to do this.” - Talia



### This is Important to Me

“That no one is made fun of for having disabilities.”

“To have a one on one room for people like my little brother.”

“That everyone belongs at our school.”

“That we have extra room in classrooms and halls for people with wheelchairs.”

## Accessibility

### Grades 5 & 6 (Smithville)

Our class met with an expert on making schools places of 'Belonging' where everyone feels like they are a part of the school. Mrs. Sarah Pot visited us in an assembly to teach us about Universal Design and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The act aims to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities by 2025. Things that make this possible are easy to put in when you are building a school, but harder to put in later on. Wider doors, tables that are high enough for a wheelchair, a good amount of space for a wheelchair to get around, lighting, and assistive technologies are all important for people with disabilities.

Everyone in our class knows someone with a disability, and we also learned that many disabilities are not easy to see right away. We know that we are all fearfully and wonderfully made, and that no one should feel like they can't work well in school just because of the way it is built.

**"I'm looking forward to being involved in the planning process and making sure people with wheelchairs can get through our school." - Alexis**

What does it mean to belong? We learned about 10 different ways we can make sure everyone feels welcome at Cairn Christian School. As a class, we are going to work hard to make sure that everyone is:

1. Cared for
2. Supported
3. Accepted
4. Able to be present
5. Invited
6. Welcomed
7. Loved
8. Befriended
9. Needed, and
10. Known!

Written by Cara.

## We Are All Special in God's Eyes

I used to think that...

"People with disabilities were unhappy"

but now I think...

"that they are actually some of the happiest people I've met."

I used to think that...

"Disabilities are very easy to see and hear"

but now I think...

"some disabilities are non visible or invisible."

I used to think that...

"People with disabilities are really different than people without"

but now I think...

"we are all the same."



For you informed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

Psalm 139: 13-14

# What are we looking forward to and how will it benefit student learning?

## Grade 6 (Stoney Creek)

One day Mr. Huinink came to our classroom and explained to us about the new outdoor learning spaces and playground structures at Stoney Creek. He asked us about how we can help him make a functioning outdoor learning area and playground structure for all grades to enjoy. He talked to us about the budget we were given and how we can make the most of that budget. We ended up brainstorming a whole load of ideas to choose from, but wanted the other students in the school to be able to put their input in, too. So we made a game plan to figure out a way to collect information from the other students and started brainstorming ideas for THAT. Unfortunately, we ended up in lockdown once again, so we decided to pick a day to go on other grades' Zoom calls and ask a few questions. We gathered all of the students' suggestions and played a little game of 'give and take'. We chose a few people to be on our design team, who took the most common ideas and turned them into reality.

## What ideas do we need to consider in implementing?

It is important to have outdoor learning spaces because we can learn outdoors and it is a good way to get in the fresh air and take off your mask! Having new and improved playground structures to play on will have students really excited about when it is time to go outside. We will be hoping to add more shade and more comfortable chairs or benches for outdoor learning. We also hope to add some more sports things and make the fields more enjoyable to look at, as well as new play structures and swings.

Written by Ella and Mackenzie.

Design team of primary and senior side sketches: Chiara M, Chiara G and Kaylee.



Here were only some of the most common responses:

- Swings on primary and senior side
- More comfortable seating
- More shade
- Gardens
- Sports equipment

This process helped us to be more creative and learn more about what students like from different age groups. We also learned how to communicate with others from going on Zoom calls with other students and leading those conversations about what they wanted to have outside. We learned what students from other classes would want. We learned how to brainstorm and think way out of the box to crazy ideas and took it back to things we really wanted.

Written by Ella and Mackenzie.

