



Outdoor Learning Center

Northwest Independent School District
Board Report
May 9, 2016

Master Plan Committee

- Members from campus and district leadership, students, community members and stakeholders, environmental institutes and agencies
- Led by consultant Maria Conroy and OLC Coordinator Amy Hollenshead
- Met three times in Fall 2015 and Spring 2016
- Long range plan for programming development
 - Mission and Vision
 - Programming
 - Community Involvement
 - Curriculum and instruction
 - Exhibits
 - Partnerships



Mission

Northwest ISD will connect students and community to the environment through dynamic experiences to inspire curiosity, critical thinking, collaboration and problem solving.

Vision

A globally recognized Outdoor Learning Center where all learners become life-long environmental stewards.



Strategic Goals



1. Design authentic learning experiences to adapt to the needs of our students' academic and personal growth.
2. Develop a team of exceptional educators and volunteers to optimize student and community engagement.
3. Communicate in a timely manner with educators and community to evaluate and enhance programming needs.
4. Practice environmental friendly techniques to support and manage natural and restored habitats.
5. Develop and foster community, business and industry partnerships to enhance programming and learner experiences.

First Year Focus

- Curriculum Development
- Professional Learning and support for teachers
- Volunteer Development
- Community Engagement twice a year
- Camp development for June 2017
- Community Partnership Growth
- Programming enhancement
- Foundation for environmental stewardship



Curriculum Strategic Goal



- i. Design authentic learning experiences to adapt to the needs of our students' academic and personal growth.
 - a. Experiences will stimulate questioning through exploration to analyze and interpret the surrounding world.
 - b. Experiences will cultivate a mindset for environmental responsibility formed from their own conclusions.
 - c. Experiences will provide opportunities to practice social-emotional skills and mutual respect for individual differences throughout problem solving and collaboration.
 - d. Experiences will be cross-curricular and vertically aligned to reinforce students' knowledge and skill development.
 - e. Experiences will support targeted academic needs as determined by the district and state.



Experiential Learning



Cross-curricular



Environmental Stewardship



Inquiry-based



Curriculum



All are invited to engage in dynamic learning at the OLC.

Priority Focus:

- 4th and 5th grades
- 7th and 8th grades
- Kindergarten
- APES and on level Environmental Sciences

Choice!

- Matter
- Force, Motion and Energy
- Earth and Space 1 & 2
- Organisms and Environments 1 & 2
- Stream Tables
- Customized experiences

Aligned with district scope and sequence.

Scheduling

All grades and contents are encouraged to lead and learn at the OLC.

Priority Focus has first pick on dates:

- Elementary 51 days
- Middle School 10 – 20 days
- High School 5 – 10 days

Special Events already reserved:

- Open House
- STEM Leadership
- Schluter Day
- Spring Family BioBlitz

Calendar is open for reservations. Policies established for reservations.



First Annual BioBlitz

A Bioblitz is an event that focuses on finding and identifying as many species as possible in a specific area over a short period of time.

- Supports Citizen Science
- Get Outside Initiative
- Open to entire NISD community
- Hosted at the OLC
- Organization and Industry donations
- Innovative grant base



Professional Learning



Prepare teachers for active engagement

- Pre-visit materials
- How-to videos of any tool use or experiment
- What to Do! Videos
- Inquiry prompts
- Support on Moodle and Google Docs
- Parent/volunteer support materials

Follow-up surveys

Summer 2017:

- OLC tours and workshops
- Experiential learning workshops

Facility Planning

New Facilities offer flexibility for programming:

- Student Engagement Priority
- District Uses
- Community events

Long Range Plans:

- Community usage
- Rentals
- Neighboring district engagement
- Plan for wildlife habitat restoration and stewardship



Long Range Plans

I – 10 years

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3 to-5		Year 5 to-10	
Rank	Goal	Rank	Goal	Rank	Goal	Rank	Goal
1	OLC Staff Growth	2	Self-guided tours	3	Tree House	8	Texas Pioneer Area
5	Community Involvement			4	Alternative Energy	15	Farm/Ag
6	Maintenance Staff Growth					18	Crops to Sell
9	OLC App Development					19	WIFI property wide
11	WIFI Added			7	Lath House		
12	Tech Enhancements			10	Greenhouse		
13	Signage			14	Exhibits		
17	Guided Trails			16	Formal Evaluation		
20	Night Lighting						

New Audiences

1 – 10 years

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3 to-5		Year 5 to-10	
Rank	Goal	Rank	Goal	Rank	Goal	Rank	Goal
1	NISD Families	5	Scout Troops	4	Large group PD	7	Pre-K Program
2	OLC Teacher Training			6	Senior Citizen Visits	10	Visits by other ISDs
3	Extensive Summer Camps			9	Daycare Students	11	Open Concerts
8	Other NISD uses			12	Rentals		

Use of Area &

Style of Programming

1 – 10 years

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3 to 5		Year 5 to-10	
Rank	Goal	Rank	Goal	Rank	Goal	Rank	Goal
4	Themed trails guided by teachers*	5	Self guided theme trails*	10	Aquatic Programs		Donor or grant funded hard exhibits
9	Orientation Film	6	Indoor* Labs/Programming				Evaluation of Programming for next 10 years
11	Circulation Aids						
Ongoing Development and Implementation*							
1	Themed trails with programming support, signage and tech integration.						
2	Exhibits						
3	Environmental/Conservation Practices in Use Signage						
4	Themed Areas – Fossils, Woodlands, Prairie...						
12	Discovery Carts						
13	Technology Usage						

Support Us!

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