

The Brunswick School Department in Brunswick, ME is building a new, locally funded elementary school for 680 students in Pre-K through second grade. The school will be located on the _____ acre site of an older school building not far from town. The Playground Committee seeks a landscape architect or playground designer who can help fulfill our vision for play spaces at the school that are nature inspired and place specific with a mix of traditional and specially built elements. We seek designs for two large play areas, one to the east and one to the west of the school building, which will each serve up to 100 kindergarteners through second graders at one time. The two spaces should be equivalent and yet distinctive. In addition, we seek a design for a separate, fenced, preschool play space adjacent to the preschool wing with space and materials for up to 60 children.

The play spaces we envision should look and feel primarily natural and varied in materials (rather than large swathes of grass, wood chips, and plastic equipment) yet provide spaces for scattered traditional playground equipment, which we will work with a traditional playground structures company to include in the final design. They should be welcoming and feel as if there is more to see and explore than first meets the eye. They should be specific to this location and time and setting – providing a real sense of place – and provide room for gross motor, social-dramatic, and creative play. We are committed to the inclusion of all children in play; the play space should reflect the spirit of least restrictive environments and ADA compliance as well as the letter of the law.

The two large elementary play spaces, as well as the preschool space, should provide a series of contrasting elements:

- Ease of supervision coupled with children's illusion of privacy and coziness
- A balance of hard (paving, stones, paths) and soft (grass, wood chips, pine needles) surfacing
- A balance of open spaces and more intimate spaces that encourage play in differently sized groups
- Natural beauty with ease of maintenance and durability for constant use by large groups of young children
- Safety yet challenge
- Spaces and activities planned for wintery months as well as for warm, sunny weather

Gross Motor Play should include places and equipment for upper body strengthening, swinging, balancing, climbing, rolling, spinning, sliding, running, support of locomotor movements, and spaces for playing games with rules. Social-dramatic play should include spaces for imaginary play (houses, cars, boats, forts, treehouses, etc.) benches, tables and chairs. Creative play should include sand boxes, building materials, art spaces (perhaps large wall space for drawing with chalk or water), and music making. Some of these needs can be met through traditional purchased playground equipment but, where possible, natural elements designed and built for this specific play space should also be included. All the spaces should utilize the existing natural elements of the sites (small wooded areas for example) and plans should include modifying the terrain to further the above goals.

We welcome proposals that support this vision of young children's play and look forward to creating unique and beautiful play spaces for the youngest public school students in Brunswick.