Library and Computer Lab
Parkdale Elementary School | Hood River, Oregon
Opsis Architecture

Warm tones and wood finishes, visible to the exterior, complement the rural mountain community.

transparency

At Parkdale Elementary, 3,800 sf of new library and computer lab spaces were added to an existing facility built in the 1940s. The new facilities are tucked into a U-shaped courtyard allowing the computer lab to have good daylighting while avoiding glare, while the library combines a warm, wood-finished space with magnificent views of Mount Adams across the Columbia River Gorge. The building opened for classes in September 2010.

The addition brings together two active, growing and community-oriented spaces, which were originally located at opposite ends of the building. With a goal of creating a community space and maintaining a sense of openness, the interiors focus on transparency, flexibility and warm materials. With a limited exterior wall, the design maximizes the views of Mount Adams with floor to ceiling windows across the north end of the library. A deliberate connection between the library and computer lab is made through windows that bring the spaces together. Sailcloth diffusers soften the light through multiple skylights in the library and computer lab, eliminating glare in the space.
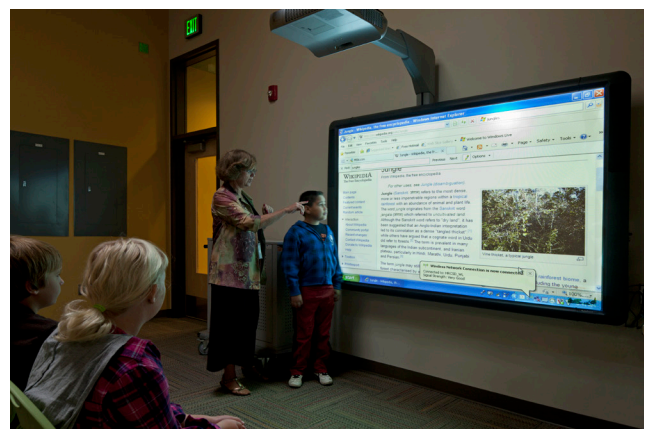
Movable carts allow configurations for large events or small groups.

flexibility

Increasing the flexibility of the library space, movable carts are used for book storage, allowing the staff to create smaller spaces for instruction or study groups. Different learning modalities are addressed through the ability to create small or large spaces within the larger context of the room. The library features a smart board that is connected to the computer lab. Located near an entrance to the building, the relocation of the publicly used spaces allows for extended hours and additional activities.

Warm wood finishes create a calming atmosphere and are balanced by colorful walls in each space. The outstanding views of Mount Adams and the Gorge result in a scenic backdrop for students and staff. Furniture throughout the space is sized for both children and adults, reinforcing its accessibility to various user groups.

Windows into the library link the two rooms and create a sense of community.