

PLAY

THE HIGHEST FORM OF RESEARCH

AMELIA ALLEN | SARAH DEGRAY

The Dilemma

- Movement throughout the site.
- Connection between areas.
- Variety of programing on site.
- Site is not designed to suit every individual child.
- Current play area does not interact with landscape.

The Goals:

- Create an interactive Landscape.
- Improve the site's system of movement.
- Provide multi-functional gathering spaces.
- Provide spaces that appeal to different learning types, ages, and personality types.

Project Thesis:

When first approaching this project, our main goals were to provide areas that children with different learning styles, personality types, and ages could use for both education and play. We made the decision that our design would layer education and environmental stewardship with the aspect of play. Play is the factor that ties these two concepts together. As children are playing throughout the site, they are also building a connection with their environment, while also learning the curriculum of Caroline Elementary in a new way. Play makes learning enjoyable and exciting. Albert Einstein said it best: "Play is the highest form of research." With this design, we hope to provide places that students will feel excited to learn through various forms of play.

To approach the idea of creating different spaces that appeal to each learning type (audible, tactile, and visual), we first separated each area into its own space. The idea was that the audible learning area, for example, would consist of outdoor music equipment and an area for music classes to practice outside.

However, as we started looking more closely, we discovered that this approach was inherently wrong. There is no clear, distinct separation of the learning types. No person is exclusively a tactile learner. Each human being possesses the ability to learn in different ways, but learn more easily in some ways than others. In addition, most activities are not distinctly one learning type or another. For example, is painting a visual activity or a tactile activity? We don't know! Separating our design into areas designated for one type of learning would have created a learning environment that was too rigid.

Instead, we designed areas for activities of a similar nature, and we arranged them so that the quietest activities were closest to the school to avoid distractions. In doing this, we created areas that were more artistic but not strictly visual, more active but not strictly tactile, and more musical but not strictly audible. Each learning type is integrated in each space, although our individual spaces might appeal to a child with one dominant learning type over another.

We believe that all of our initial goals were realized despite the change in direction our project took. The spaces we designed can be used for educational purposes, but they are also really fun! We feel that we have created spaces that can be used for a variety of different purposes. Our designs also appeal to all three different learning types, despite the fact that we did not design specific areas for each learning type.

HILL CLIMB
GARDEN PAINT
LIBRARY
LEARN
CREATE MUSIC
COLORFUL BUILD
QUIET READ LOUD
RUN
ART

Concept Diagram:



Precedents

Gonzalo del Val:

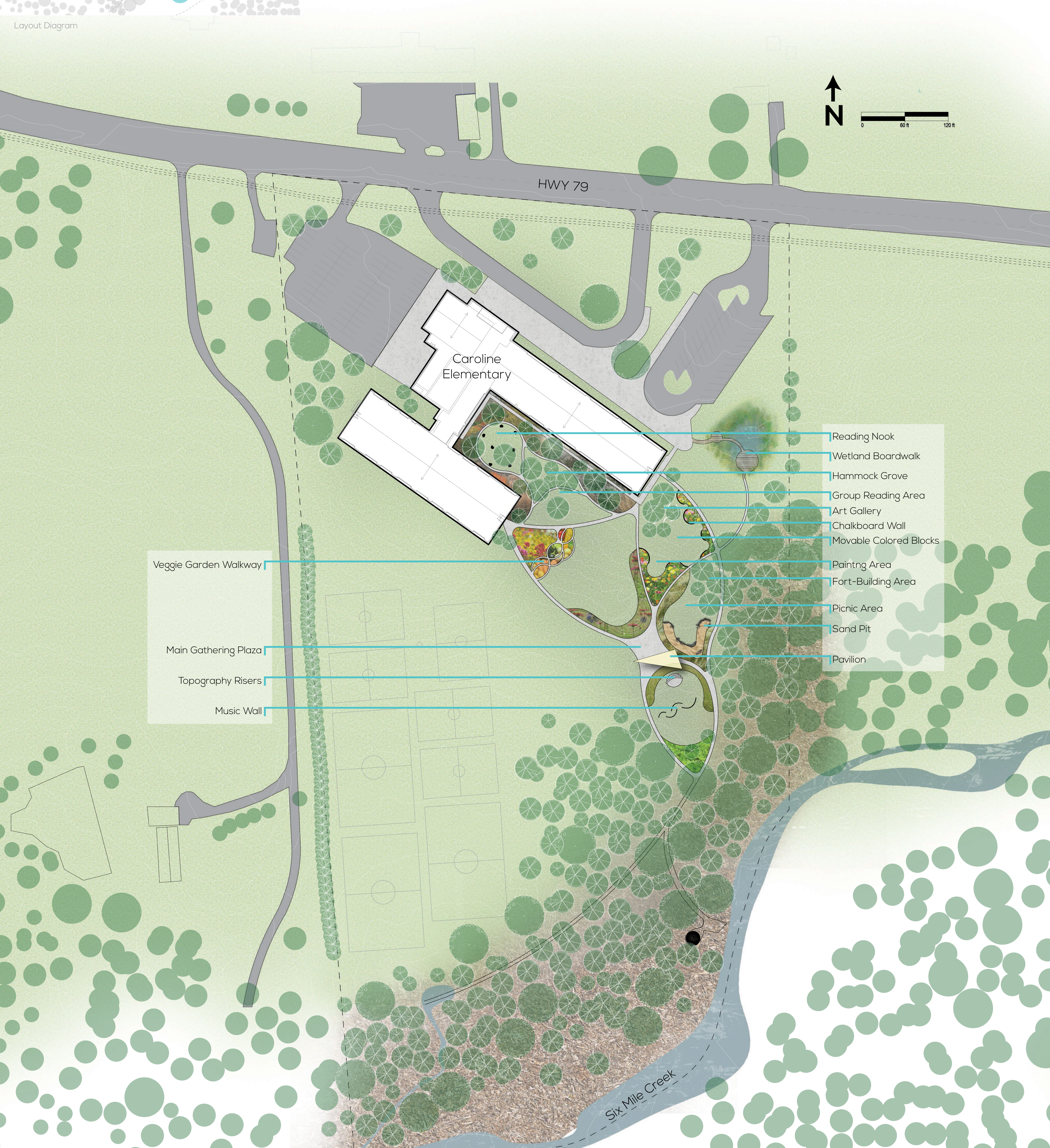
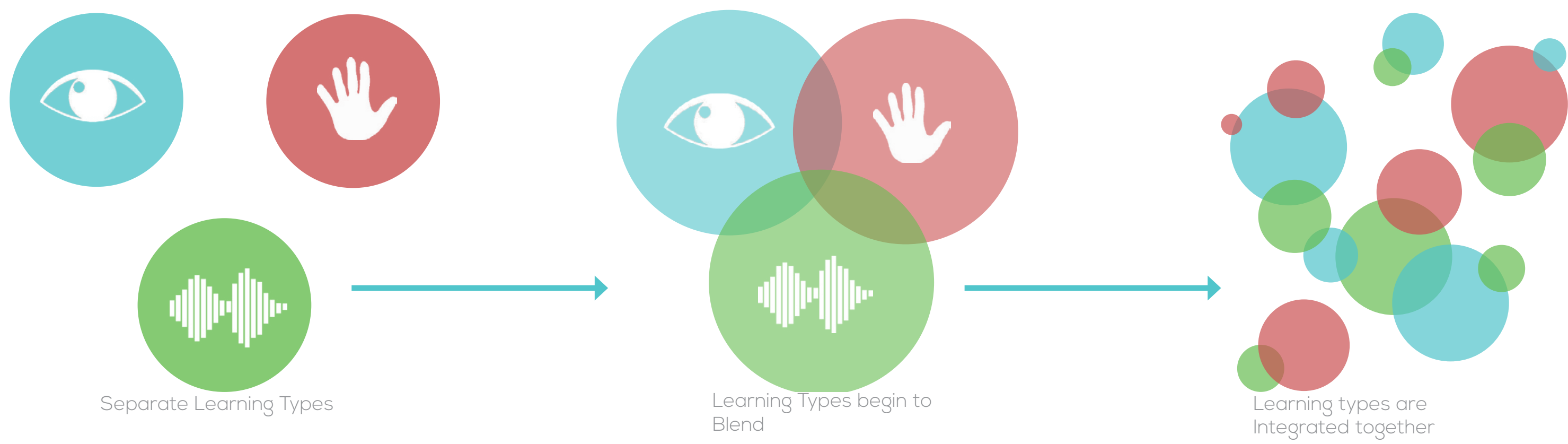


The above showcases Gonzalo del Vals reading structures for the park. Inside the twigs materials are books encased in waterproof plastic covers. These reading structures served as a inspiration for the reading areas in the courtyards.

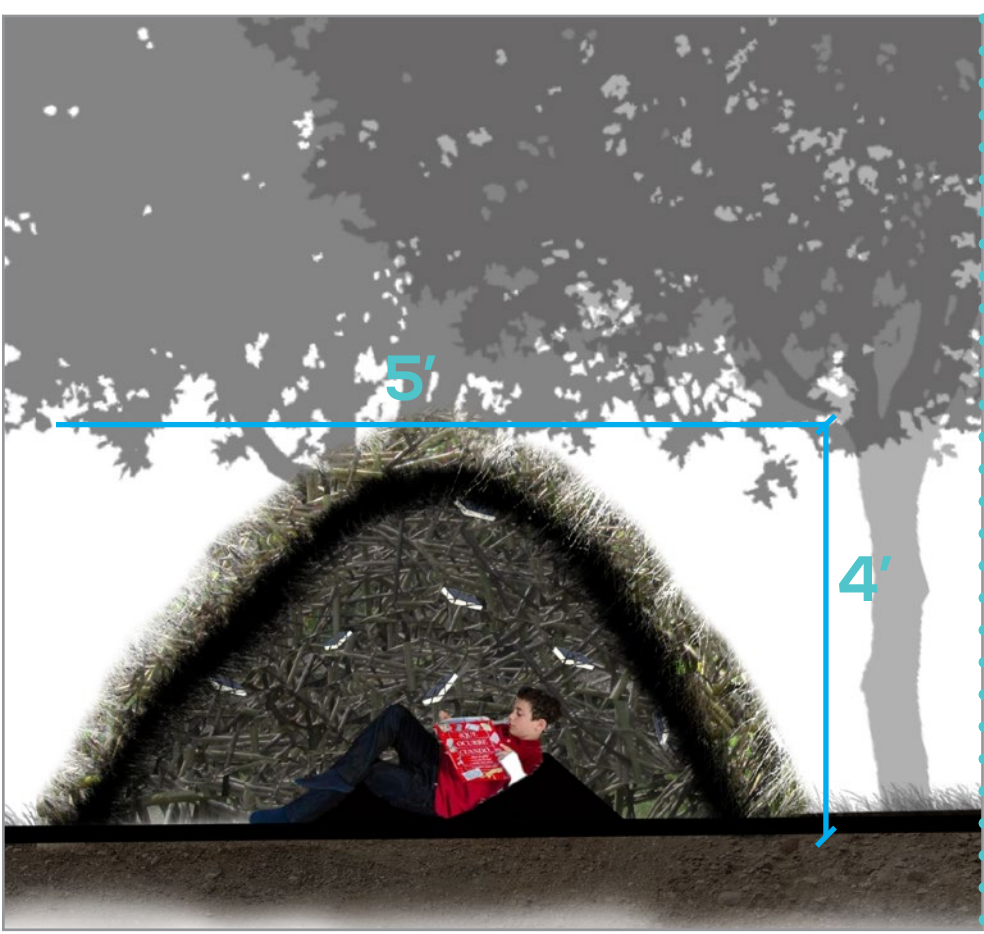
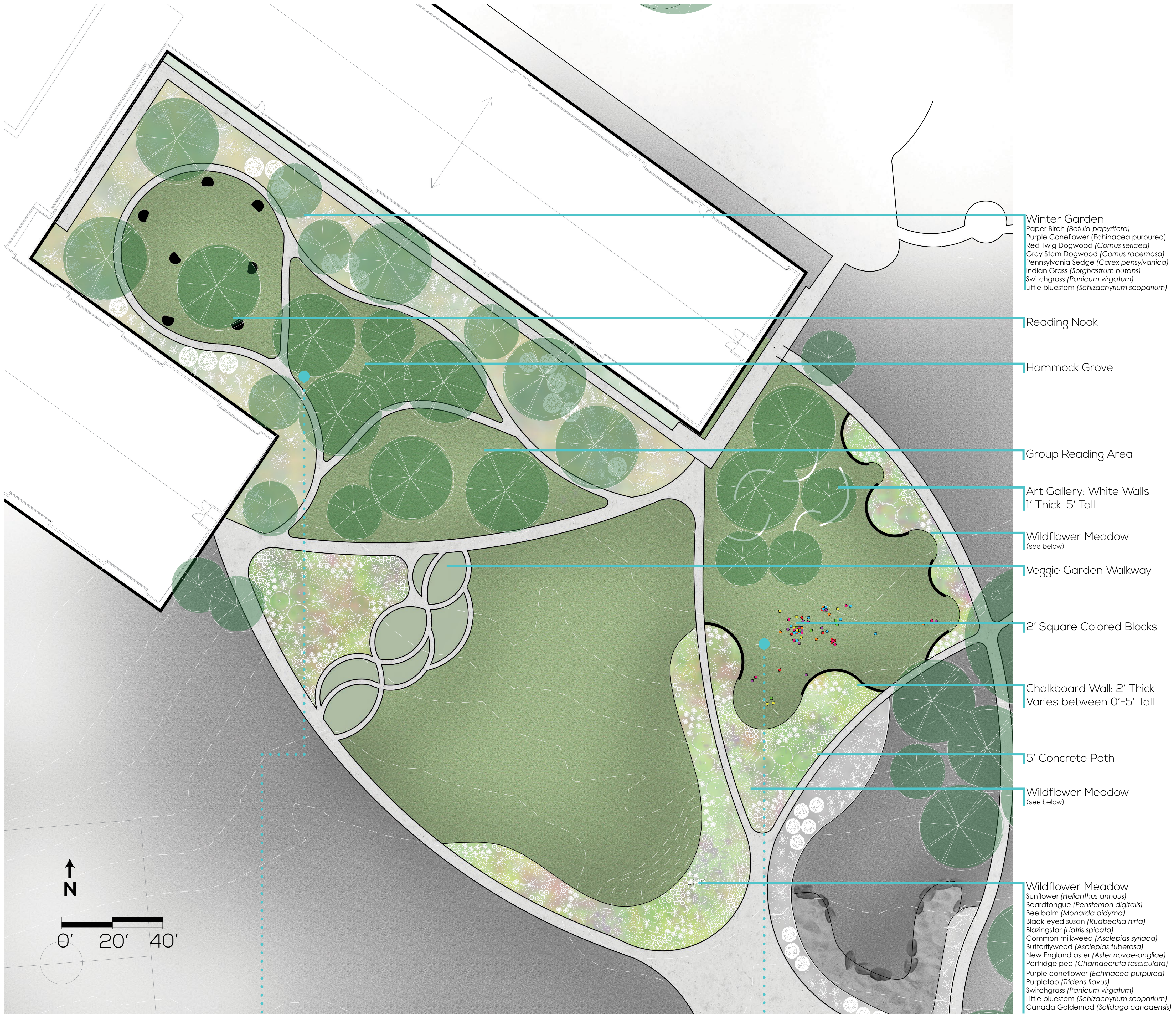
Nature Explore:



Nature Explore is an organization that specializes in outdoor learning environments for kids. They explain the need for kids to have a wide range of opportunities available such as; art, music and gardening. The Goal to connect children with nature in an educational way became a strong concept in the design.



Area I



The Reading Nook is an area in the courtyard of the school. Here children can use this space as an outdoor Library. Dome shaped structures give students an opportunity to privately read and relax.

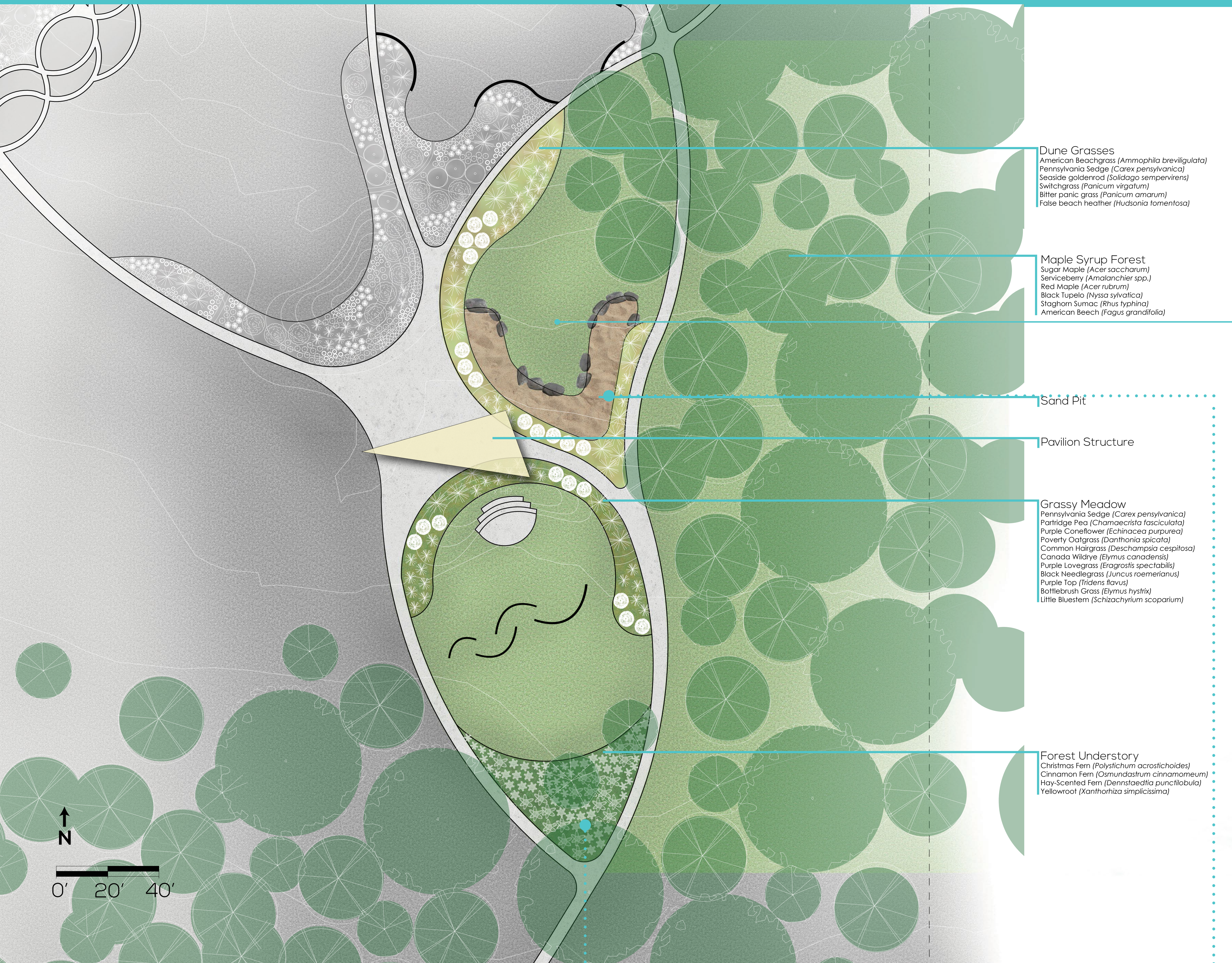


The hammocks are a great place to go and relax or even to talk with my best friend. I like going in the hammock area especially on a nice day when you can hear the bird chirping.



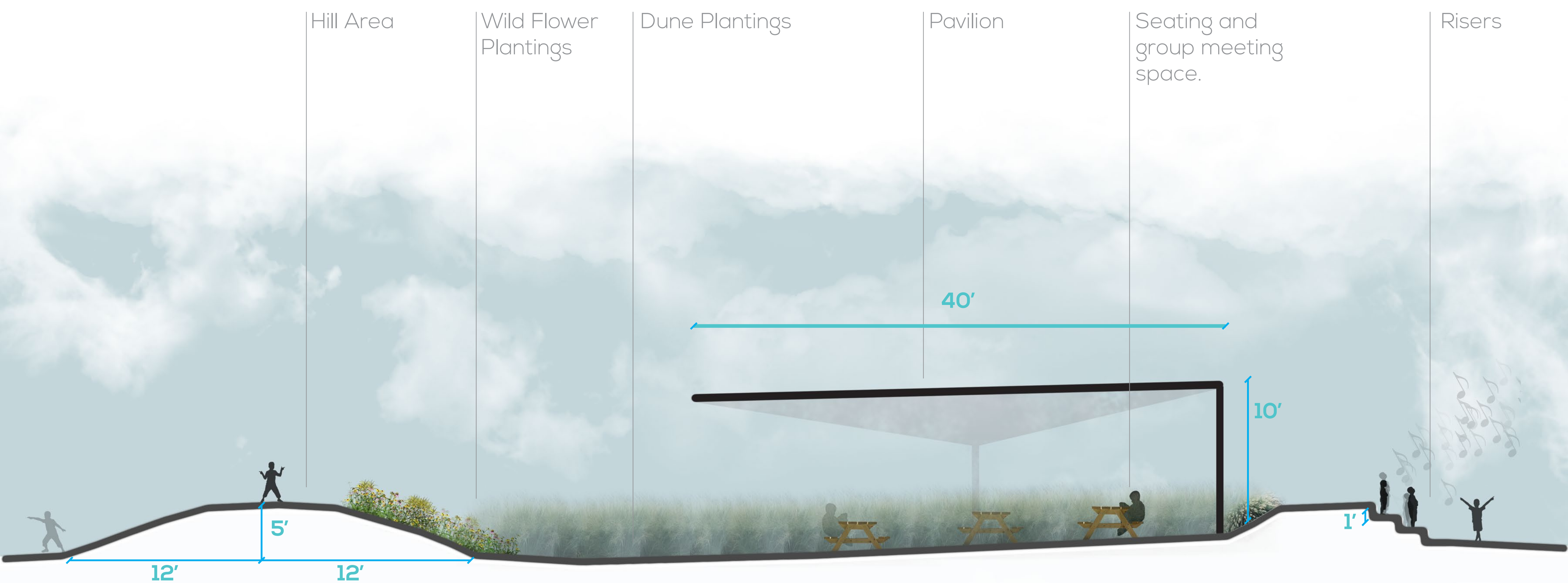
This is my art studio! Look at all of the color and nature that is around. You can do anything here from painting on easels to drawing with chalk to making block sculptures. Some times my teacher even uses the blocks for lessons like math.

Area II



Pavilion

The pavilion area is located right at the convergence of all paths in the area. This section can act as a gathering space for large or small groups or as a seating area for individuals.





There so much that you can do in the winter here! On good days my teacher lets us go outside and we play with the big colorful blocks. Sometimes my teacher even takes us to get the maple syrup from the forest!



On warmer days I love to play in the sandpit or build forts! I learned that it takes a lot to make a good fort and now I am an expert. One of my favorite things to do is build things with my friends.



The music wall can be a feature that is designed by the children or the needs of the music teachers at the school. Having fun and interactive tools to make sounds can correspond well into the classroom.