

Wycallis

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buy something at Toys R Us. They had to keep those toys on their desks to remind them that we were designing the building for children," said Karasinski.

It is quite evident when you walk into the school that it is a place for children. The hallways and entranceway use bright primary colors, and the mechanics of the building, that is, the beams and ductwork, are exposed and brightly painted. The front hallway and the library were built with a Lincoln Log design in mind.

"We actually used real wood beams, notched out and put together just like Lincoln Logs," said Karasinski. The library also features a "Reading Room" with benches along the three sides of a wide-open windowed area.

"It is really something to see the children sitting there while the librarian reads to them. They settle right into those seats," said Suzie Herstek, a second grade teacher at the school. "Last week when we were talking about President Lincoln and how he lived in a log cabin, one of the children said, 'We have that here in our school.'"

The architects incorporated several metaphors into the structure of the school. There are huge boulders in the front of the building supposedly dropped by a giant on his way in to hang the very large analog clock in the front hall. "Since kids like rocks and frogs and such, the circular roofs in front represent lily pads and the side windows look like firemen's ladders," explained Karasinski.

"We designed the school as a brain-based learning environment. We put true compass points on the floor of the cafeteria. Xs and Os into the tile patterns in the rest rooms, a butterfly garden in the back and an outside environmental classroom with logs to sit on."

That classroom may not get as much use as it would if it had a shade tree or two, but the outside area of the school is heavily used by many of the classes. "I love to take my class for a nature walk in the fall and spring," said Mrs. Herstek. "We walk from Wycallis to the back side of Dallas Ele-



PHOTO COURTESY OF QUAD THREE GROUP

The exterior of Wycallis Elementary incorporates design elements that appeal to young children.

"The color scheme sets a wonderful tone for the kinds of activities we like to have here."

Kathleen McCarthy
Principal, Wycallis Elementary

mentary. There are so many things for them to see."

Many classes also meet outside the "Wall Entrance" near the fifth grade classrooms. It is an open, shaded area dominated by a concrete wall etched with familiar drawings.

"We had a contest with the students at Westmoreland and we picked two pictures from each grade," said Karasinski. "We cast the winning pictures right into the wall." That wall delineates the elementary school from the adjoining administration building.

The design also included the recess area in the back of the building. In addition to the butterfly gardens, there are planter boxes that the Wycallis PTO filled with herbs and Earth Day at the school has been celebrated by planting perennial flowers throughout the area. Also, there are benches for reading, play-ground equipment, and large maps of the world and the United States painted on the ground.

All classes at Wycallis still enjoy a daily recess period. On rainy days, the first and second grades have recess together in

the gymnasium. "It is so accommodating. There is plenty of room and they really enjoy the socialization," said Herstek.

The gym is one part of the building that gets a lot of after school use. During the current basketball season the gym is occupied on an almost daily basis until nearly 10 p.m. "These buildings belong to the public, to the community, so I think they should be used," said Kathleen McCarthy, principal at Wycallis.

"The building works well. The color scheme sets a wonderful tone for the kinds of activities we like to have here," said Mrs. McCarthy. "The building provides an atmosphere that encourages creativity and thinking outside the box."

The school community enhances that look with a constantly changing display of student artwork. The hallway features very large bulletin boards for each classroom to show off their

latest creative efforts. The center of this hallway has a unique, sun-lit atrium area that is used for everything from additional learning spaces to PTO-sponsored ice cream sundae parties.

"Classes can spill out into that hallway," said McCarthy. "Teachers use it to take small groups out for extra instruction."

Although the hallways and community areas are done in bright primary colors, the classrooms are a much more subdued shade of creamy yellow. "The classrooms are very adequate especially for the primary grades," said Herstek. "We have white boards, chalk boards, bulletin boards, a television, VCR, two computers and a sink."

The first and second grades are also set up with adjoining bathrooms and each of the two kindergarten classrooms has its own bathroom.

Educational Facilities presents a selection of the best day care, elementary, intermediate, secondary and higher educational facilities in North America. Wycallis was chosen from a competition of submissions by a distinguished jury of educators and architects experienced in educational design.

Schools

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Gilbert Griffiths, Dallas Superintendent, said the group consensus stemmed from two main issues: duplication of services and the No Child Left Behind Legislation (NCLB).

Griffiths said having third and fifth grade in the same school puts the district at risk to not meet new NCLB legislation proficiency requirements. If not met, the district could be labeled distressed and lose state and federal funding and have teachers and administrators removed.

According to Ketchner, other "benefits" outlined by the task force that will be presented to the board include:

- More consistent education for students within a grade level.
- Centralized resources and professional development.
- Better tutorial support.
- Opportunities for frequent grade level meetings for teachers
- Elimination of the need to transfer students to different buildings.

Ketchner said the task force has discussed five possible layouts for grade level redistribution and all will be presented to the board. She said out of the five, the group felt changing Dallas to K-3 and Wycallis to grades 4-5 would best meet the needs of the district.

Kathy Kerpovich, PTO president for Wycallis, said she doesn't feel the positives of a realign-

"I don't know any parents for it (realignment)."

Kathy Kerpovich
Wycallis PTO president

ment would outweigh the negatives. "I don't know any parents for it (realignment)," she said.

Kerpovich said she believes the present kindergarten through grade five environment fosters a "family atmosphere" where teachers and students get to know each other better.

"When there are eight third grades, you don't get to know everyone," said Kerpovich.

Asked if they felt the district was already committed to the realignment, Ketchner and Kerpovich both said they felt it was.

"I think there has been a rumor going on for so many years we realized it was going to happen, we just didn't know when," said Kerpovich.

The task force will present its findings and the board of directors will vote on whether to proceed with the recommended changes.

"Ultimately it is the board's decision, not ours. We just did the homework and hashing out," said Ketchner.

Pizza, silent auction to benefit Harveys Lake Protective Association

The Harveys Lake Protective Association will hold their second annual "Winter Warm-Up" Pizza Party and Silent Auction at Grotto Pizza on Saturday, March 8 from 7-11 p.m. The event is open to the public. The menu will include pizza, stromboli, hoagies, dessert, soda, coffee and tea. Alcoholic beverages will be available at a cash bar. The cost is \$8 per person if paid by February 28, or \$9 after February 20, or at the door. Any business or individual wishing to donate an item to be auctioned, or to make a reservation, may contact Debbie Sobek at 639-5515. All proceeds will benefit Harveys Lake Protective Association Community Projects.

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