

Saxon Hill School

Spring 2009 Newsletter

Inside and out, Saxon Hill School is always evolving. If you've visited lately, you may have noticed that the playground looks a bit different. In the fall of 2007, the Buildings and Grounds Committee worked hard to remove several playground elements that were either splintered beyond sanding or made from the old-style pressure treated wood. In addition to replacing the much-loved swing set with a new one, we began a community-wide conversation focusing on how best to utilize our outdoor classroom space for both individual and group learning.

Students, teachers, board members, families, alumni and the community-at-large are invited to weigh in on the future of the outdoor play space. While multi-faceted, one way we chose to move the conversation forward with students and teachers was to hire Landscape Architects, Jon Adams-Kollitz and Danielle Allen. The pair facilitated a student-led tour of the playground, the woods behind the school and the river and woods in Red Mill Park. During the tour, the children in the 4 day class demonstrated the varied uses and favorite places of our outside spaces. Three common themes identified by the children were climbing, jumping and hide-outs. From their visit, Jon and Danielle supplied a deep map to pictorially represent the children's findings and a final report.

The process we have undertaken thus far has identified numerous and varied strengths inherent within the Saxon Hill School community. Among our strengths is our ability to work together to build a strong, healthy and loving community where our children can thrive. More tangibly, plans are currently being made for several smaller additions such as a Fairy Village, a child-sized bird's nest and a slackline. The Buildings and Grounds Committee will be meeting shortly to define which projects they will be able to tackle this spring. Additionally, we are both communicating and coordinating with folks from Winooski Valley Park District, Essex Technical Center, and Jericho Settlers Farm on some larger projects to be implemented over time.