Wonderland

Design Intent

The imagination is limitless. Things like time, scale, and gravity become trivial and should never be allowed to stand in the way of a good story. For the average three- or four-year-old, the combinations of ideas can be endless. Wonderland sets the stage to tell tall tales, spin yarns, and become the protagonist of one's very own narrative. Listen to stories as you know them or improvise them on the fly. Dress up and perform to give imagination life. Offer children a chance to express themselves, and watch their character grow.

Technology Components

- Giant Mushroom Character Experience-The giant mushroom serves as a highlighting tool, using lights to identify speakers and authors in storytelling experiences. Students may choose from classroom storytelling props and costumes or create their own accessories using fabric, felt, and nature-inspired materials. The mushroom encourages collaborative storytelling: one student may be the narrator, another the hero, and others supporting characters like talking animals or enchanted trees.

Mural Features

- Windmill- A windmill harnesses the power of wind through its blades, converting wind energy into mechanical energy. Windmills have been used since 2000 B.C. The first modern wind turbine was built in Vermont in the 1940s. Wind is Ameria's largest source of renewable energy, providing 10.1% of the country's energy and growing. Windmills are an iconic symbol of Dutch culture and heritage.
- Mountain-A mountain is classified as a landform that rises at least 1000 feet or more above its surrounding area. Mountains are found in elongated ranges or chains and are formed through tectonic forces, erosion, or volcanism. The highest mountain is Mount Everest in the Himalayas.
- Well-A well is a deep hole that is dug or drilled into the ground to access water. People use wells to bring up fresh water (using buckets, pumps, or pipes) from underground for drinking, cooking, cleaning, and watering plants or animals. Wells have been in use for more than 8,000 years, with ancient abandoned wells discovered in Isreal, China, and India.

Mural Features

- Rainbow-A rainbow is an optical illusion made by light striking water droplets. The colors of a rainbow are always in order of their wavelength, from longest to shortest: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet. Rainbows are the result of the refraction and reflection of light.
- Flowers-Flowers are the blossoming part of a plant and play a key role in reproduction. They produce seeds that can grow into new plants. Most plants, including many trees, grow flowers at some point in their life cycle. Flowers attract pollinators like butterflies, bees, and birds, which help spread pollen from one flower to another (pollination).
- Owl-Owls are birds of prey, using their sharp talons to hunt, kill, and eat other animals. 19 owl species are found in the United States, ranging from the Elf Owl (smallest) to the Great Gray Owl (largest). Owls are found in all regions of the Earth except the polar ice caps and some remote islands.
- Dragon-A dragon is a mythical monster that resembles a giant reptile, sometimes shown as having wings. In European culture, a dragon symbolizes chaos or evil. In Asia culture, a dragon symbolizes water and the heavens.
- Castle- Medieval castles were primarily built for defense, with most of their structures designed to provide multiple layers of protection for nobles. Though they appeared strong, many were made for display than actual security. Castles were constructed from materials like wood, stone, or brick.
- Tree-A tree is considered a perennial plant. Most plants classified as trees have a single self-supporting trunk with the trunk producing branches. There are more than 73,000 discovered species of trees.
- Fairy House-In stories and fictional tales, a fairy house is described as a small, whimsical home where fairies live. These homes tend to blend into the natural environment like mushrooms, tree trucks, or flowers. They symbolize magic, mystery, and a world unknown to humans.
- Mythical Mushroom House-In European folklore, mushrooms are believed to be gateways to the realm of dreams. According to these tales, humans were cautioned against stepping on them, or they would be transported to the fairy world.

Themes to Explore

- Fantasy and Reality
- Classic Fairy Tales
- Storybook Characters
- Storytelling and Bookmaking
- Dreams
- Magical Landscapes
- Cultures and People

Mounted Artifacts

- Mirror Mirror Storytelling Stage-Using mirrors to enhance dramatic expression helps children observe their own facial expressions and body movements, enhancing self-awareness. Mirrors can be used in role-playing scenarios to practice empathy and recognize how expressions convey meaning.

To Find Out More

- International Children's Digital Library
- American Folklore
- The American Folklife Center