



HYPE (CARPET TILE) IN A CUSTOM COLOR



COVER  
HYPE (CARPET TILE AREA RUG) IN A CUSTOM COLOR

TACOMA, WA, USA

# Arlington Elementary School

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DESIGN FIRM  
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SEGMENT  
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Arlington Elementary is an exploration of what spatial possibilities emerge when education is considered a living, breathing organism that requires revolutionary facilities. In its new elementary school project, Tacoma Public Schools' envisioned that there would be no classrooms but rather spaces for learners and learning activities. In response to this vision, the school moved away from typical hallways and embraced a design that centralizes core instruction with side-by-side learning areas that scale in size.

## Nimble Movement Results in Active Learning

In place of a classroom, each learner/teacher has multiple interconnected spaces that allow nimble freedom of movement, group size, program development and collaboration to support a network of learners. This is achieved while making cost and space efficiency paramount, as well as being responsive to multiple education models.

The planning process revealed that 77% of the learning time will ideally occur in groups of 15 students or less. Best practices for teaching also supports this finding. At Arlington Elementary, direct instruction is minimized 25% to 15 minutes per hour, and active learning is maximized 75% to 45 minutes per hour.

For Arlington, a functional programming process was utilized to understand spatial needs in terms of learning activities, while capitalizing on student group sizes that maximize learning outcomes. This led to an agile learning model, where each learner/teacher is given a core instruction space, a shared learning project lab, a flexible shared learning area, multiple small group rooms and a secure outdoor learning space. All these were accomplished without increasing the program size.

## Carpet Tile Rugs Create Flex Learning Spaces

The fluidity among the learning spaces is supported through a seamless aesthetic, and the flooring had to be as functional and flexible as the school design. To maximize the school design, concrete floors are accented by Shaw Contract Hype carpet tile in customized colors in the core learning spaces.

Carpet tile rugs in the shared learning project labs and flexible learning areas delineate space and enhance the soundscape. The rugs also help create a cohesive sightline from space to space, which was imperative in providing an overall interconnected design aesthetic.

The school architect and designers teamed with Shaw Contract to create flexible flooring solutions that bridge the overall design aesthetic. Through the use of more than 30 area rugs ranging in size up to 26 ft x 50 ft, spaces are defined while maintaining flexibility should the future needs of the space change. Non-skid backing on each rug ensures they will not slide over the concrete during busy day-to-day school activities. The carpet tile rugs help absorb the school-day sounds, while anchoring seating arrangements for the active learning environment.

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“The Arlington Elementary School culture allows students to learn all day, every day, and throughout the year in environments where learners are continuously challenged, relentlessly supported, and engaged in a way that is both safe and healthy. To understand the context of this community in need, the team embraced a collaborative, immersive approach with broad user engagement.”

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