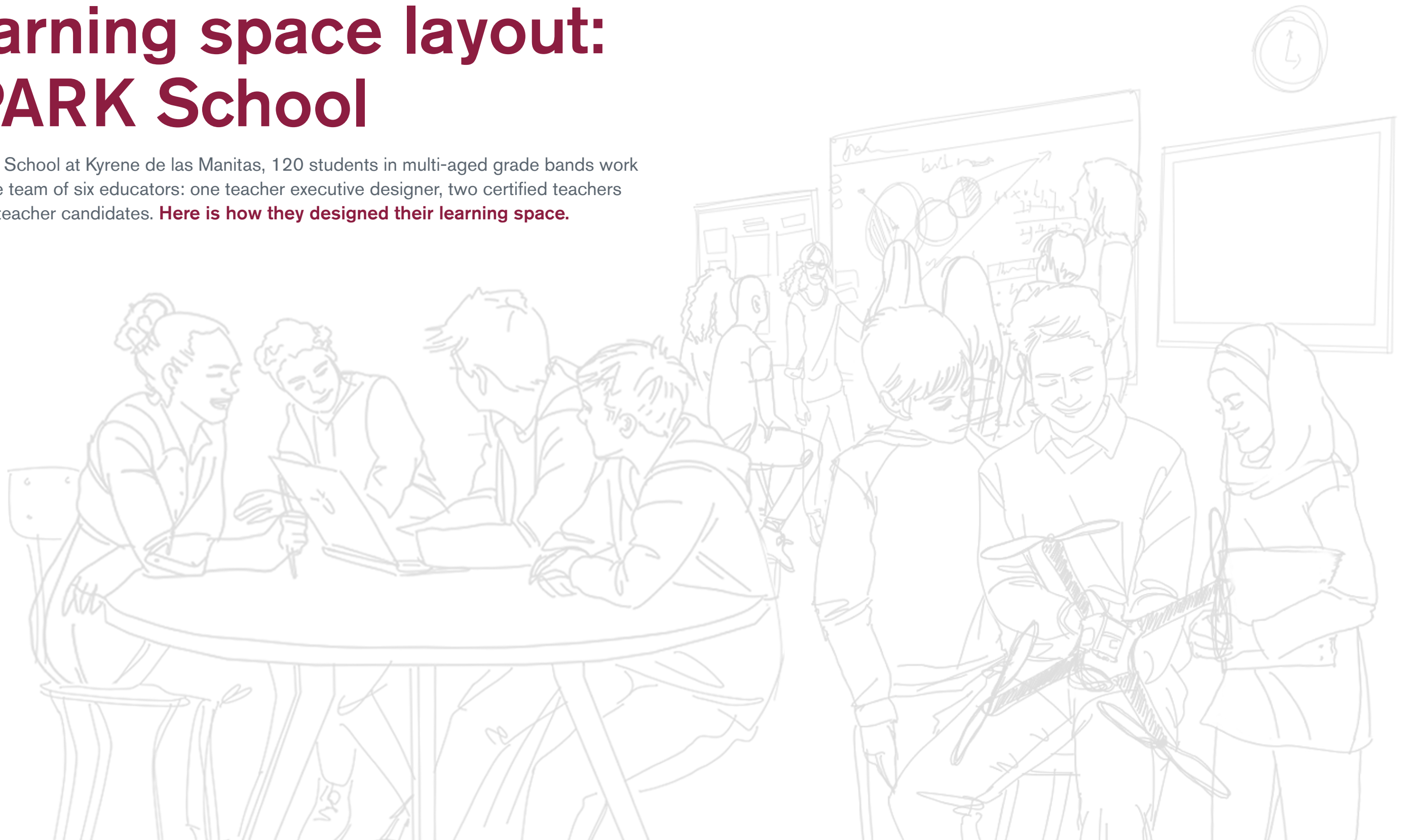
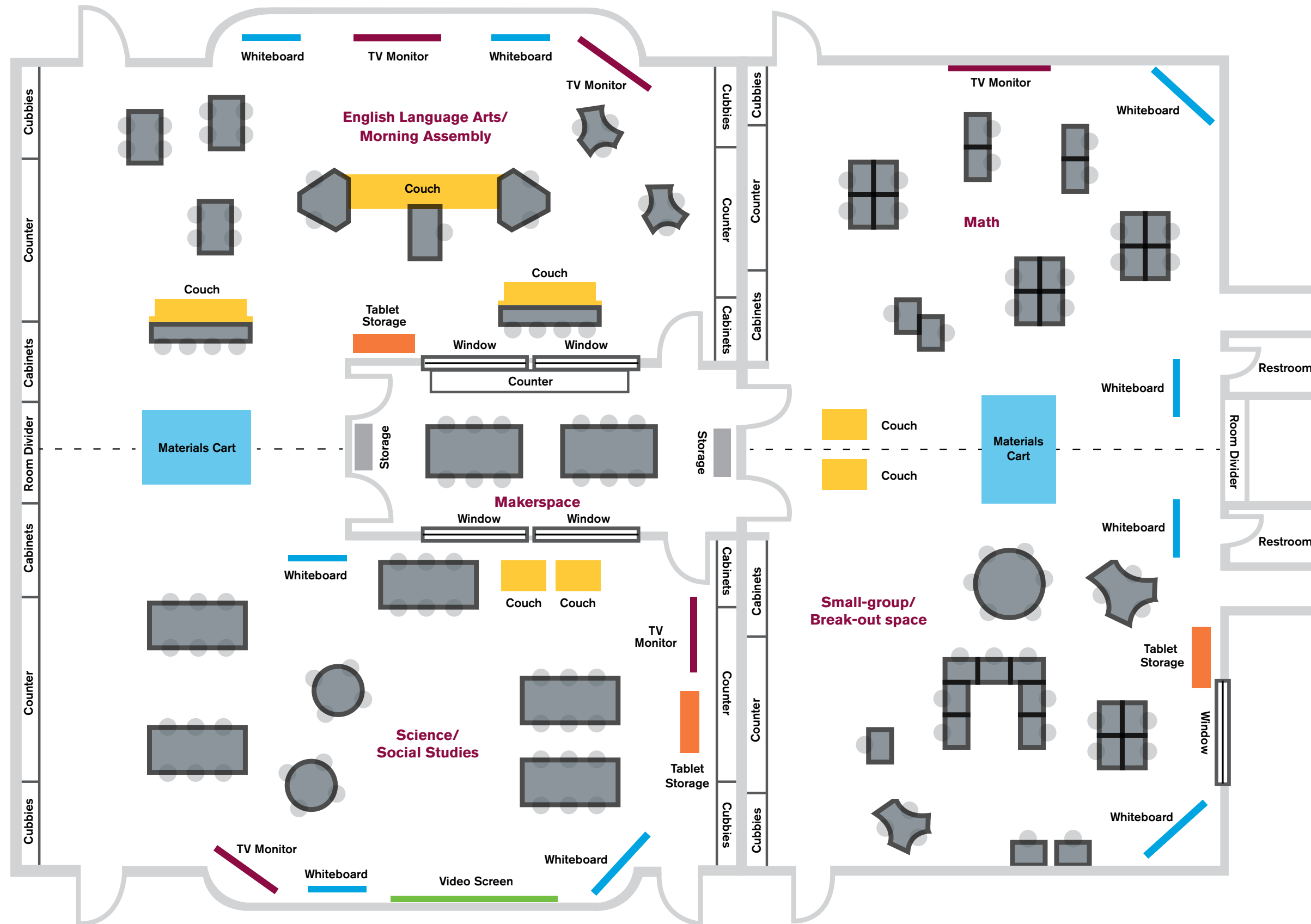


Learning space layout: SPARK School

At SPARK School at Kyrene de las Manitas, 120 students in multi-aged grade bands work with a core team of six educators: one teacher executive designer, two certified teachers and three teacher candidates. **Here is how they designed their learning space.**



The learning space at a glance



Key elements of the learning space

► Moveable furniture

Most furniture — everything from desks to whiteboards and monitors — is on wheels, and educators regularly reconfigure the space to support the purpose and structure of the lesson and the needs of both educators and students. For example, each day during Student-Selected Mindfulness Time, all furniture in the small-group breakout space is pushed to the walls so that students can practice yoga. During a mock trial students conducted as part of an interdisciplinary English language arts/social studies unit, the English Language Arts/Morning Assembly space was reconfigured to mimic a courtroom. When students engage in a virtual meeting with an industry expert, they typically gather in the science/social studies space using tables, couches and floor space.

► The Makerspace

The Makerspace is connected to all of the learning spaces and is surrounded by windows, allowing for a line of sight into the other four, larger learning spaces. Inside are two high tables, each surrounded by stools; a 3D printer; and counter space for storing projects. Students use the Makerspace for small-group work, maker activities using Lego robotics, and sessions with community educators.

► Additional learning spaces

SPARK educators and students also make use of two additional learning spaces not represented here. The team has access to a combination podcasting and greenscreen room which fits four to five students comfortably and is equipped with the technology necessary for students to produce their own podcasts and videos. They also have access to a room that comfortably seats six and serves as an additional small-group learning space or conference space.

► Materials management

Each student has their own assigned cubby where they store items that stay at school. Backpacks, however, are kept in color-coded buckets in the hallway. Unlike more traditional setups, educators don't have individual teacher desks. Instead, they travel between rooms with a few necessities (e.g., phone, laptop) and keep other belongings (e.g., lunches, books) on shelves in the learning spaces.

► Student movement

During major transition times in the schedule, students transition through the hallways. If students need to move to a different space mid-session, they sometimes move directly from one room to another (when room dividers are not in use) or through the Makerspace.

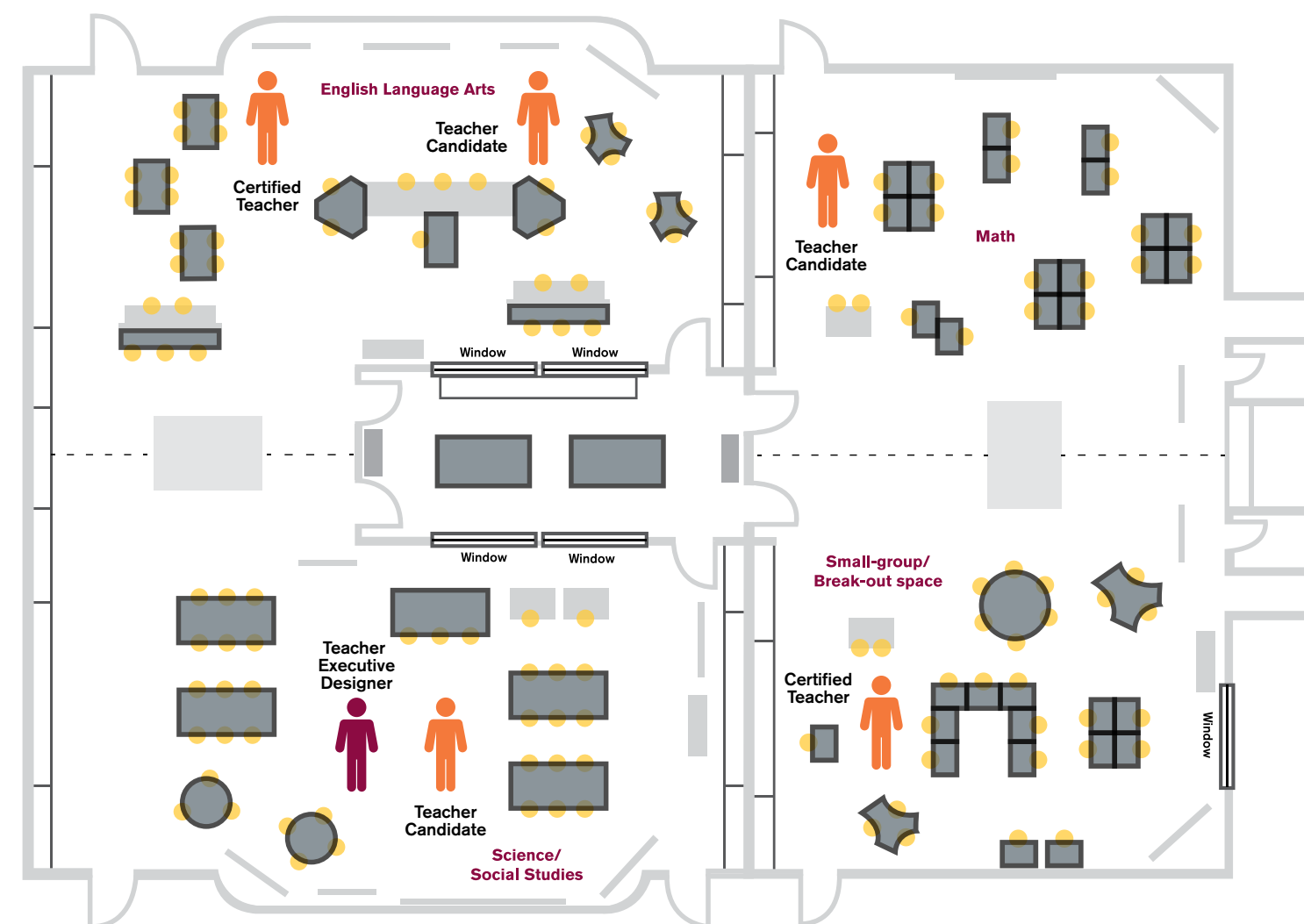
Configuring the learning space for different purposes

Examine the three sketches that follow to see how educators configure the learning space differently for different educational purposes.

Content area sessions

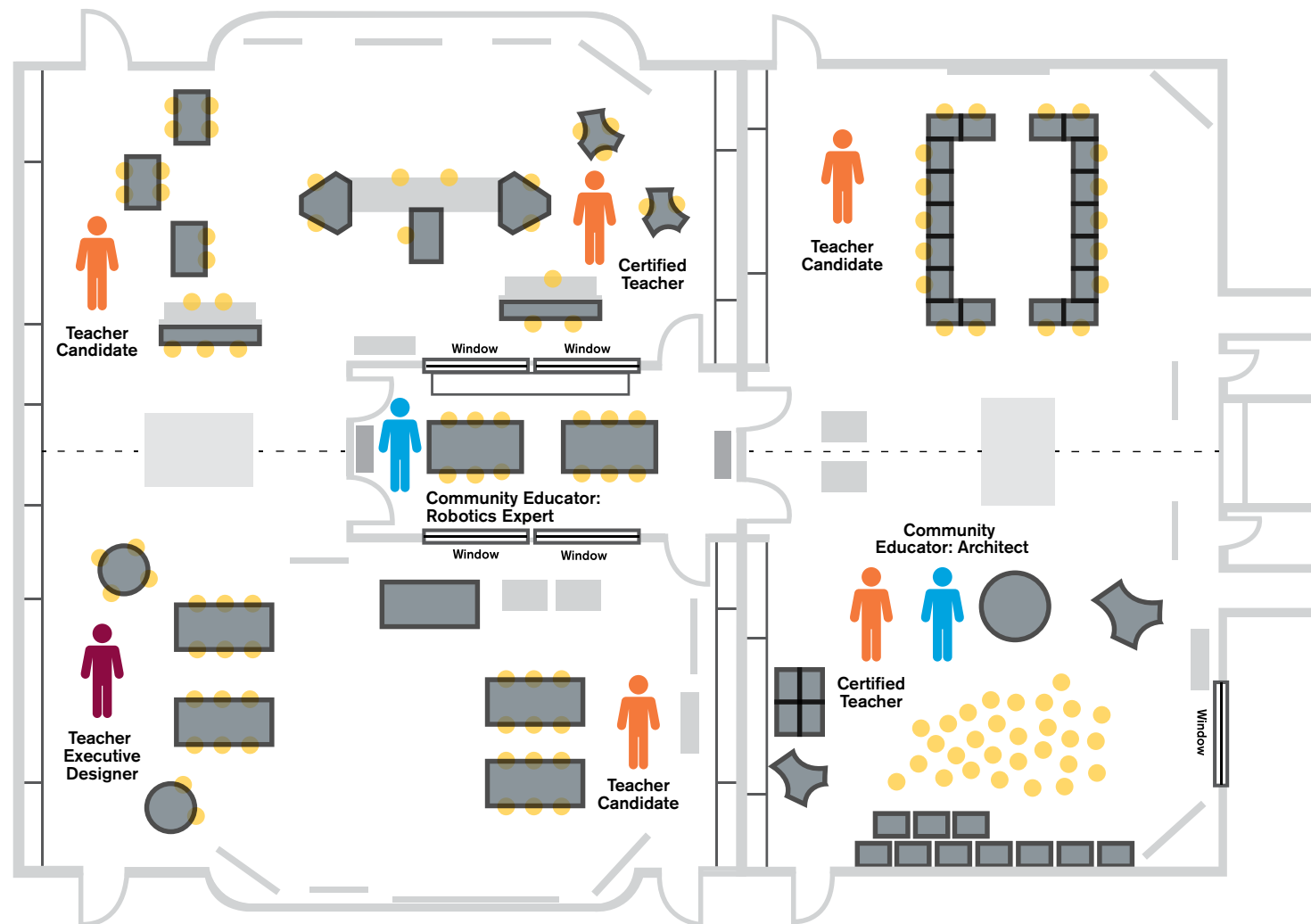
All students attend three project-based learning content area sessions daily:

- **English language arts:** This is a multi-age class. Data on student literacy is used to ensure groups are heterogeneous.
- **Science/social studies:** This is also a multi-age, heterogeneous class. Units alternate, with students studying science for two or three weeks followed by social studies for two or three weeks. Science/social studies and English language arts are planned to maximize cross-curricular connections.
- **Math:** In contrast to English language arts and science/social studies, student grade and student learning data determine whether students attend Math 3, Math 4, or Compact Math, a program addressing both 4th and 5th math standards.



Genius Hour

During the daily Genius Hour, students delve deeper into aspects of their studies that especially intrigue them. Topics change every two months.



Virtual video conference with an expert

One of the ways SPARK partners with community educators is by engaging them in virtual video interviews and discussions. For example, in November, students interviewed an attorney in preparation for participating in a mock trial. During these learning experiences, students gather in large groups in front of a video screen so that everyone can engage at the same time. Typically, students prepare their questions in advance and are accountable for recording their learning during the discussion.

