The Bezos Learning Center soars toward the sky, uplifting learners of all ages with curiosity and wonder for the universe.

Whether watching the clouds, following the trail of a rocket, or gazing at the stars, looking up at the sky connects us all with a shared sense of wonder and possibility. This powerful metaphor is our design principle for the Bezos Learning Center. It shapes a building that lifts from the plaza to create soaring, light-filled interiors with design features that continually draw visitors’ gaze upwards framing science-on-display, views into teaching spaces, and glimpses of the sky. Our proposal connects back to the National Air and Space Museum, where visitors are continuously looking up at exhibits suspended in the air.

The design integrates harmoniously to the massing, height, and balcony openings of the National Air and Space Museum, while its sweeping form connects to the curvilinear shape of the neighboring National Museum of the American Indian. Banded openings in the façade draw gazes upwards, bringing light and revealing the interior. Bringing learning out of the building, the surrounding public space is a dynamic, net-zero Astronomy Park, with a public observatory lined with photovoltaic panels and a forest of solar energy ‘trees’ inspiring curiosity and connections between planets, building, and sustainable energy systems.