



SHIRLEY HALL MIDDLE SCHOOL

Executive Summary

Weatherford ISD is a school district located in Weatherford, Texas, a growing community not too far West of Fort Worth. After passing a \$74.9 million bond in May 2015, the district was able to address aging facilities, a large portion of the bond budget going towards the replacement of Shirley Hall Middle School. This middle school had been around for nearly 50 years and was considered a historic building to a budget conscience community.

Creating a 21st century learning environment that promotes collaboration through versatility and sets the precedent for learning environments in WISD was a major goal for the district. This was achieved through the design of the new Hall Middle School which encompassed learning neighborhoods, collaborative spaces, outdoor learning areas, writable surfaces and agile furniture.

Students are exposed to a collegiate learning style through passive supervision and interchangeable

classrooms. Teachers are given the flexibility to migrate between classrooms based on the student's and subject needs. They do not "own" their classrooms in the traditional sense. Teacher planning spaces located in each neighborhood give them the opportunity to work outside of the classroom and more room for planning and collaboration.

Four outdoor learning areas allow students to be connected to nature and give them another outlet for collaboration. These outdoor learning areas also allow for natural light to be present all throughout the school, as almost every single classroom either has a view or passive access to them.

The demolished existing building is not forgotten. It has been reborn into a facility that has longevity, durability, inspires collaboration and is a staple of the community symbolizing a bright future for not only the students but the community as a whole.

PROJECT DETAILS

PROJECT NAME: SHIRLEY HALL MIDDLE SCHOOL

LOCATION: WEATHERFORD, TEXAS

DISTRICT NAME: WEATHERFORD ISD

PRINCIPAL: JEANETTE McNEELY

OCCUPANCY DATE: AUGUST 2017

GRADES HOUSED: 6TH - 8TH

CAPACITY (STUDENTS): 1,100

GROSS AREA: 132,995 SF

PER OCCUPANT (GROSS): 121 SF

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION: \$33,207,449



SCOPE OF WORK

A 50-year-old campus, not up to district standards, but full of history and memories. The existing Shirley Hall Middle School was built in 1967 to serve grades 7th through 8th at a capacity of 900 students. The 110,000 square foot building encompassed a very traditional design consisting of lockers in each hallway, limited natural lighting due to very few windows throughout the school, and a library that was tucked away.

The district increased campus capacity to 1,100 students to allow for projected growth and to realign middle school feeders to serve grades 6th – 8th. Adding 6th graders back into the middle school provided the district much-needed reductions of the student populations at all elementary schools and eliminated the need for portable classrooms.

The new Shirley Hall Middle School paves the way for a bright future, helping the district address aging conditions, improve efficiency and modernize the learning environment. The school features flexible configurations to support peer-to-peer and active learning. Three grade-level neighborhoods or “mobs” (each neighborhood is referred to as a “mob,” the collective noun for the school’s mascot, the kangaroos), offer access to classrooms, collaboration zones, outdoor learning space and a collective teacher work/office area.

Keeping the community informed throughout the process was important to the district as they were cautious about the cost of building the new school. The district wanted to ensure the community that resources were being utilized efficiently and that staying on budget was a high priority. The project was completed on budget through careful subcontractor,

“The school features flexible configurations to support peer-to-peer and active learning.”

site, and design management. The construction and design teams coordinated on cost vs. design throughout the pre-construction process, while maintaining the district’s and community’s needs and expectations.

The mission of Weatherford ISD is to teach, challenge, and inspire each student in a safe, nurturing environment to succeed in the global community. The new middle school

promotes these values by empowering autonomy through passive supervision in the collaborative spaces and mobs, agile furniture and outdoor learning areas.

BUDGET

In May 2015, Weatherford ISD passed a \$74.9 million bond allowing the district to address existing facility improvements, grade realignment, growth, and safety and security. Shirley Hall Middle School was the largest project in the bond, coming in at \$33 million.

The district was able to save significantly by utilizing the existing site. The simple concept provides a cost-effective site and floor plan solution, as well as the structural and MEP solution. Construction on the new building began while school was still in session in the existing building. The siting of the new single-story building is in response to the location of the existing school building, competition gym and track and field, and allowed for limited disruption during construction. The existing building, minus the gym, was demolished.



COMMUNITY

Shirley Hall Middle School is located in the historic town of Weatherford, Texas, about 30 minutes west of downtown Fort Worth. It is one of the fastest growing cities in Texas and is known for its community-oriented way of life. Weatherford's vision balances rich, western and pioneer heritage with progress and economic vitality, giving them the motto, "Growing with Tradition."

The district has two middle schools. One was newer, sitting on the Fort Worth side of town where much of the town's newer residential growth has occurred. The second one, Hall Middle School, is the original middle school and was replaced. By doing so, it has revitalized the area of town and revitalized the community.

Hall Middle School is named after educator Shirley Hall, who started out on the Weatherford ISD school board in 1960. She held several positions on the board during her 30 year tenure, serving as president in 1973-1974 and 1982-1983.

Hall Middle School is a historic building to the community and

wanted to honor it as such before the demolition. The district held a community event, inviting school administrators, community members, school board trustees and other special guests to walk the halls of Shirley Hall Middle School one last time. It was a bitter sweet time saying "goodbye" to fond memories, but also gave the community excitement looking forward to the new and improved middle school.

"We've always been fortunate to have great support in Weatherford for the Weatherford schools..."

Dr. Jeffrey Hanks, WISD Superintendent

As the town evolved, a main right-of-way was developed on the opposite side of the campus. This caused the original campus orientation to have its "back" to the main street. The district and community wanted to make the new middle

school more prominent and face the main right-of-way. The campus now has a new identity within the community and is clearly visible from the main street. The middle school now sets the precedent for the district going forward regarding how education will be delivered by not only promoting collaboration through versatility for students, but for the teachers as well. The facility provides multiple venues for community use and connectivity.

The love for the 50-year-old campus from the community resulted in their high level of involvement and expectation during the planning process.

STAKEHOLDERS

Community members

District administration

Middle School Principals

Students

Neighborhood



An aerial photograph of a large, multi-wing school building under construction. The building features a mix of brown brick and grey metal siding. The roof is mostly white, with some sections still showing brown insulation or underlayment. To the left of the main building is a large, flat, brown rectangular area, possibly a pool or a large storage area. In the foreground, there are several smaller white buildings with blue roofs. To the right, a parking lot is filled with cars, and a road runs alongside the building. In the background, there are more buildings, trees, and a distant city skyline. Two blue text boxes are overlaid on the image: one on the left pointing to the 'old entrance' and one on the right pointing to the 'new entrance'.

OLD ENTRANCE FROM
RESIDENTIAL AREA

NEW ENTRANCE
FROM MAIN STREET

CHALLENGES

Every project comes with its challenges. It is how you handle them that makes all the difference. In the case for Hall Middle School, there was unusually high rain fall during many of the months on this project, enough to extend the schedule well beyond the desired opening date. Utilization of subcontractor overtime and utilizing strong relationships with the on-site subcontractors to increase crew sizes and work on several areas simultaneously, the team was able to overcome the rain delays and open the building in time for the district to move in and have students attend the first day of school in their new building. Even with this challenge, there were savings remaining in the project budget that allowed the client to perform some miscellaneous projects on-site for added security, and function for the new building.

Another challenge was the location of the existing building. Due to its close proximity to the new school, this made the demolition a bit of a challenge. The re-orientation of the building was also a little difficult due to the fact that there was not fire access throughout the building during construction. The general contractor had to work around the building.

AVAILABLE ASSETS

The district was able save significantly by utilizing the site that the existing middle school was located on, which also contained unused acreage. This allowed WISD to maintain the existing location of Hall Middle School, and not be left over with an old building to re-purpose and maintain, or a vacant piece of property. The advantage of this site for the district is its proximity to their administration and technology buildings.

Construction on the new middle school began and ended while the existing middle school remained open. There was even an area of the new building that was within a few feet of the existing building making for a challenging construction process.

Additionally, the district was able to integrate the existing gymnasium into the new middle school. This was a substantial benefit to the community as they were still able to use their existing facility while the new one was built. This also saved the district money by not having the rebuild the gym.



AGILE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

At Hall Middle School, every space provides opportunities for learning. The school is organized into grade-level mobs, which are color coded and include a teacher planning area, collab space and multipurpose lab. The mobs are flexible to be changed if the school wants them coded by subject instead of grades.

The mobs were designed with a glass enclosed collective teacher space at each entry. These spaces help with campus security, provide holistic views of student's behavior and ease student access to the teachers for additional instructional needs. Student collab spaces create a lively, open learning environment at the heart of each mob. Movable furniture and writable surfaces within open collab spaces allow students to work independently and in small or large groups.

In addition to the collab spaces within the mobs and throughout campus, the school was designed with learning "pockets" that allow students to spill out of the classroom and use for breakout sessions.

Natural lighting encompasses Hall Middle School creating a vibrant learning environment and connecting students to the outdoors. This is made possible by

designing outdoor learning areas in pockets throughout the school. Every classroom either has a view or access to one of the courtyards, encouraging students to use these spaces as collaboration zones.

THE TEACHING MODEL

Furniture was an important feature when designing the school, allowing for flexible instructional styles. Each classroom is equipped with movable technology, agile furniture and writable surfaces.

Students and teachers at Hall Middle School receive a collegiate experience in teaching style as teachers do not "own" their classroom in the traditional sense. The classrooms were designed to have no ownership. Teachers have the ability to move around classrooms based on the needs for each subject allowing for dynamic scheduling and improving efficiency.

Teacher planning rooms in each mob serve as their "home" where they can have their own desk to work. Teacher planning areas were put in the corridors to help model collaboration for the students and also give teachers more space for planning. Just like the classrooms, teachers have the flexibility to reconfigure furniture in their planning space.

"Student collab spaces create a lively, open learning environment at the heart of each mob."

PLANNING PROCESS GOALS

- Create student community and sense of ownership
- Preparation for progressive and future educational delivery systems
- Conserving district resources

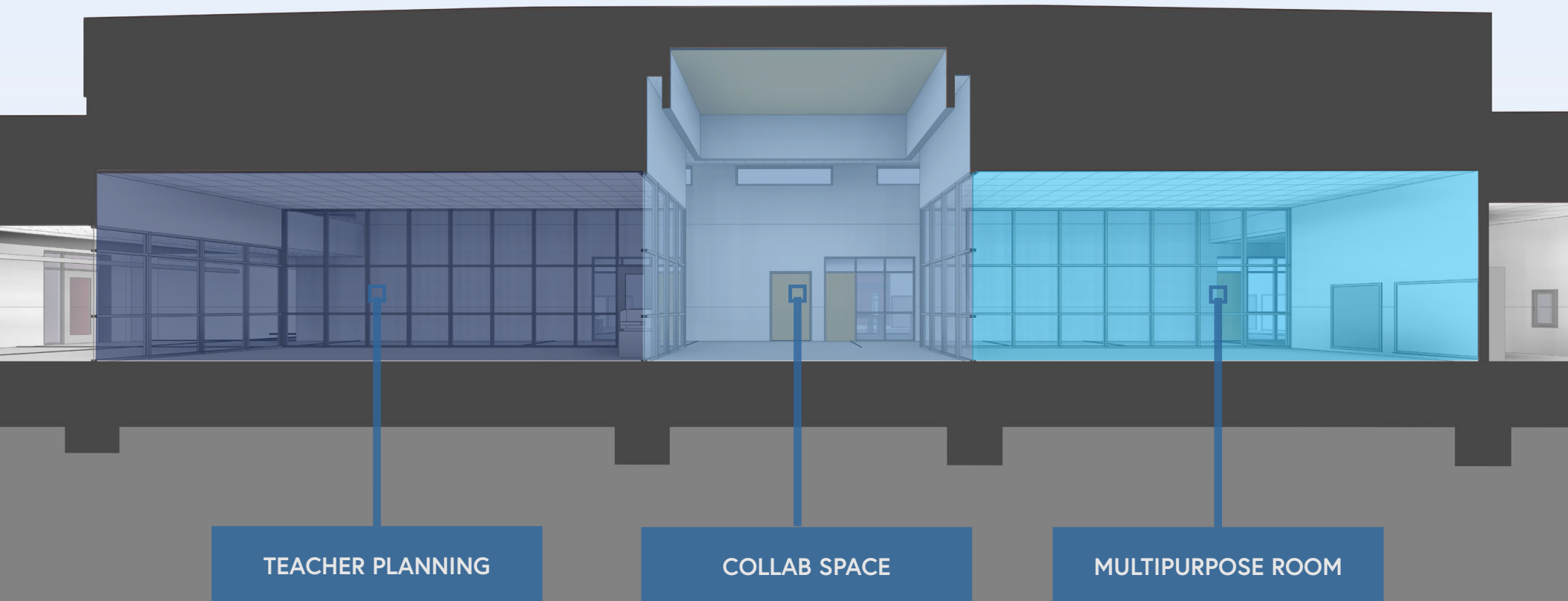
VALUE TO COMMUNITY

The existing Hall Middle school held 50 years worth of memories to the community. When replacing the middle school, the community weighed in heavily as they had high hopes for the outcome with a strict budget in mind. The new middle school exceeded the community's expectations as it encompasses all the elements needed to challenge and inspire students to succeed.

The facility is also a place that can be utilized by the community for PTA meetings, performances, community gatherings, etc.







TEACHER PLANNING

COLLAB SPACE

MULTIPURPOSE ROOM

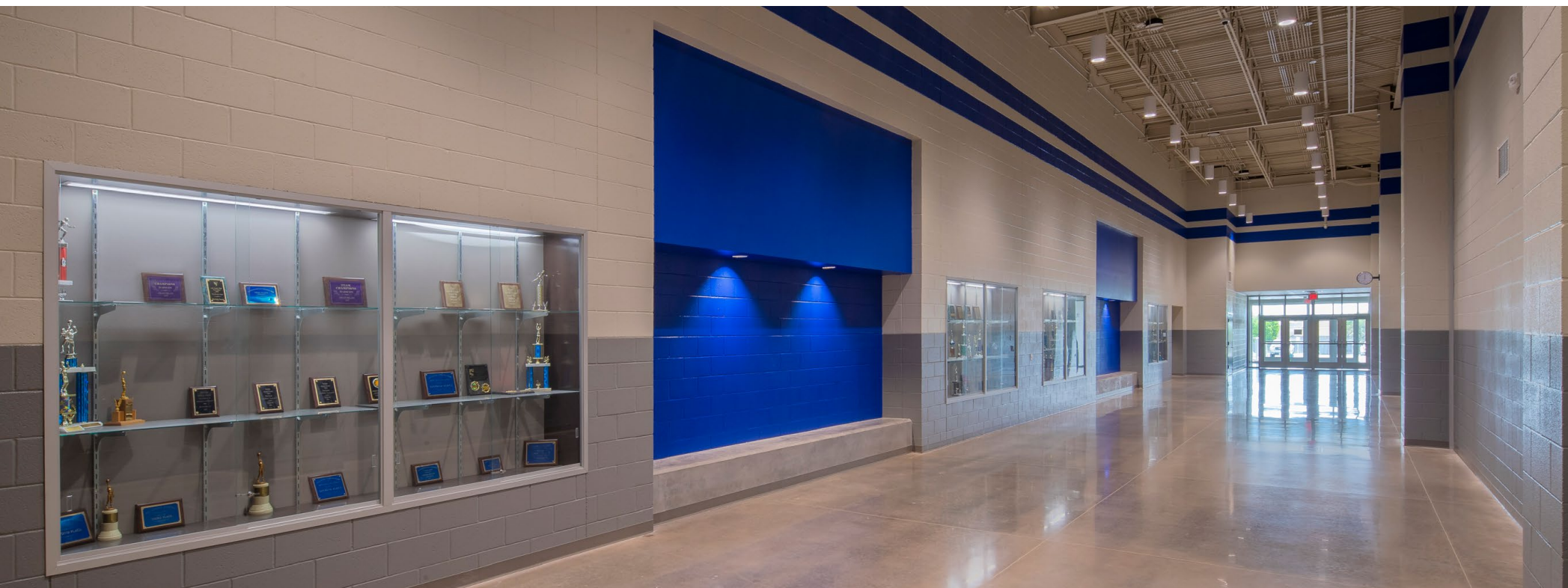
AGILE FURNITURE, STANDING-HEIGHT DESKS, MOVABLE TECHNOLOGY AND WRITABLE SURFACES ARE PRESENT IN EVERY CLASSROOM. THERE IS NO “FRONT” OF THE CLASSROOM.







LEARNING “POCKETS” ARE LOCATED
IN THE LOBBY AREA, ACADEMIC AREA
AND PRE-EVENT SPACES



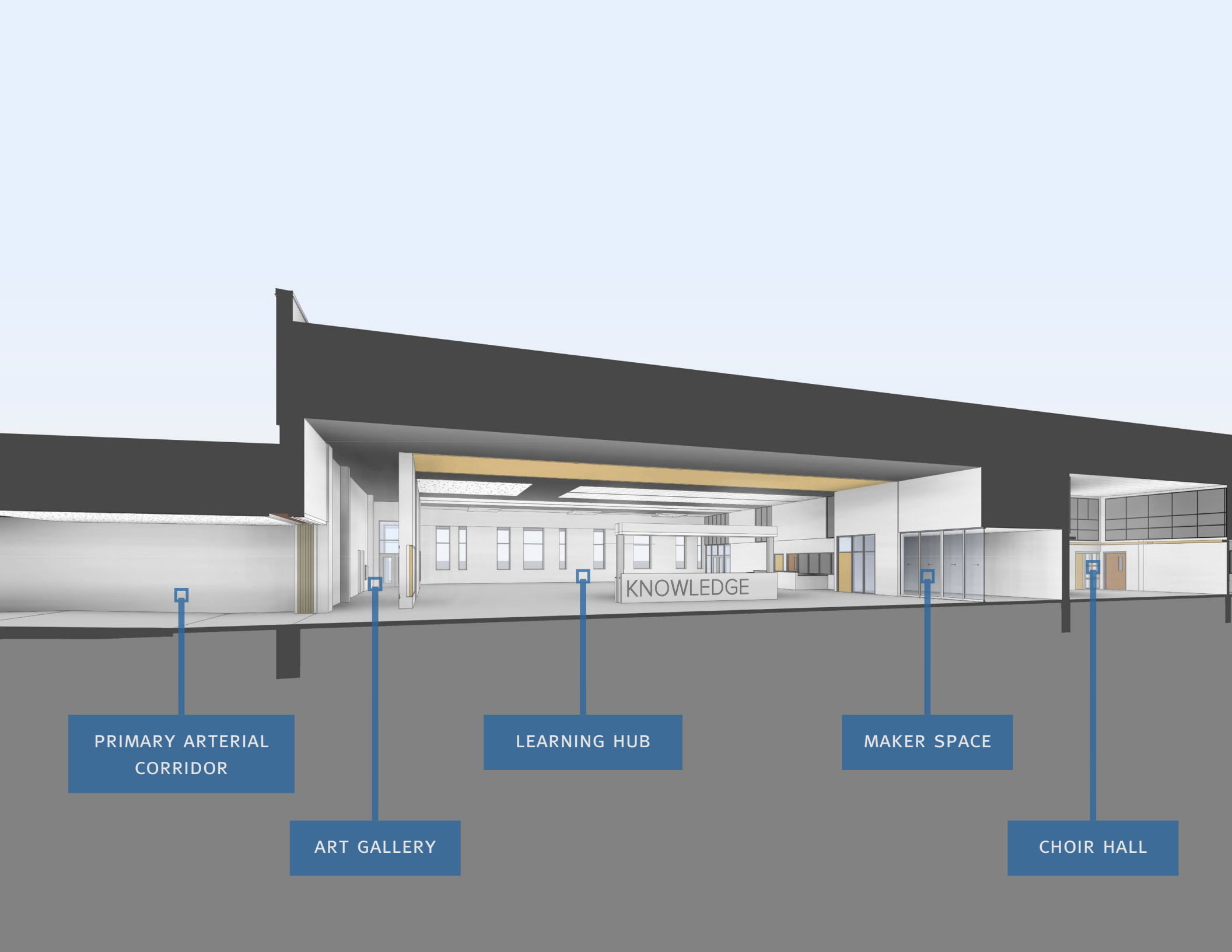


THE LEARNING HUB

The district wanted to move away from the traditional structure of a library and create a multipurpose learning HUB. Contrary to the existing Hall Middle School, the library is one of the first things you experience when entering the new school. The design of the library allows for presentations, study hall, student and/or community gatherings, class work, etc. It features an abundance of natural light, display for visual arts 2D and 3D program, reclining seats, writable surfaces and a writable presentation wall. The HUB opens to the main corridor of the building and is adjacent to the art wing and an open collab space.

Through an addition and renovation, this open concept design was also done at the other middle school in the district to model Hall Middle school and function similarly.





PRIMARY ARTERIAL
CORRIDOR

ART GALLERY

LEARNING HUB

KNOWLEDGE

MAKER SPACE

CHOIR HALL

DURABILITY AND LONGEVITY

The exterior envelope consists of two tones of brick, stone and metal panel, using natural and regional materials to give it an industrial feel. Blended materials fashion a natural environment that can be pushed and pulled to create a flexible and stimulating space.

The district had a desire for a durable and easy to maintain flooring system. Rather than going with terrazzo, which would have been much more expensive and had schedule implications compared with other flooring systems, a polished concrete system was installed throughout the majority of building spaces. The polished concrete flooring requires very little maintenance and is extremely durable. Additionally, it provides a unique and visually pleasing aesthetic to the building. 95% of the school consists of concrete flooring.

The middle school also utilized Insulated Concrete Forms (ICF) as the wall and primary vertical structural system. The ICF system saved time on the construction schedule and reduced uncertainties with long lead time.







OUTDOOR CONNECTIVITY

Creating outdoor connectivity was an important factor to the district. Nearly all of the classrooms have a view and/or access to one of the outdoor learning courtyards, which were designed to inspire creativity and encourage innovation even when students were not in them.

Each courtyard has its own identity and was designed around a specific theme: Water, Stone, Tree, and Art. All provide a visual experience for those looking outside from the building and unique experiences for those using the courtyards. Each can be used for large classroom settings or for individuals looking for a place to unwind.

Artificial turf was used in the material scheme to ease maintenance and promote use of the space year-round. Glazing surrounding the courtyards allows natural light to illuminate throughout the corridors and deep into the building.

The outdoor courtyards foster learning, provide safe relaxation zones for students and create a strong indoor/outdoor relationship. Every courtyard is secured with an iron fence and includes covered areas for shade.

The Water Courtyard: This circular courtyard is developed around a custom wave bench that closes on itself where students can sit, lay, and interact. The size of the bench allows it be used by large classes as well as individuals. A centrally planted live Oak will provide a future canopy and shade the seating areas. The Water Courtyard is a space to be used as a unique learning environment for students that promotes community, inspiration, and relaxation.

The Stone Courtyard: At first glance this courtyard seems the most conventional of the four, however its capacity for providing a wide range of seating configurations grants its users enormous flexibility. The custom, rolling gabion benches afford teachers the freedom to create classroom spaces tailored to the changing needs of daily lesson plans. This design uses a combination of materials to fashion a natural environment that can be pushed and pulled to create a flexible and stimulating space as unique as the classes that are held here.

The Tree Courtyard: The main feature of this courtyard is a series of tree branch inspired benches used in repetition to form a large single bench. The arrangement of the cast in place benches creates a series of spaces

that can be used for large groups as well as smaller groups depending on the needs of lesson. The combination of natural elements provides a pleasing juxtaposition to soften the hardscape.

The Art Courtyard: Located adjacent to the art department, this courtyard serves both as an outdoor studio and an area to display art. The courtyard design was simplistic in nature to allow the students to have a clear mind while working on projects. This simple space serves as an inspirational environment to spark student's creativity and display their work.



THE STONE COURTYARD



VERTICAL & HORIZONTAL
SHADING DEVICES



INDOOR & OUTDOOR
LED LIGHTING

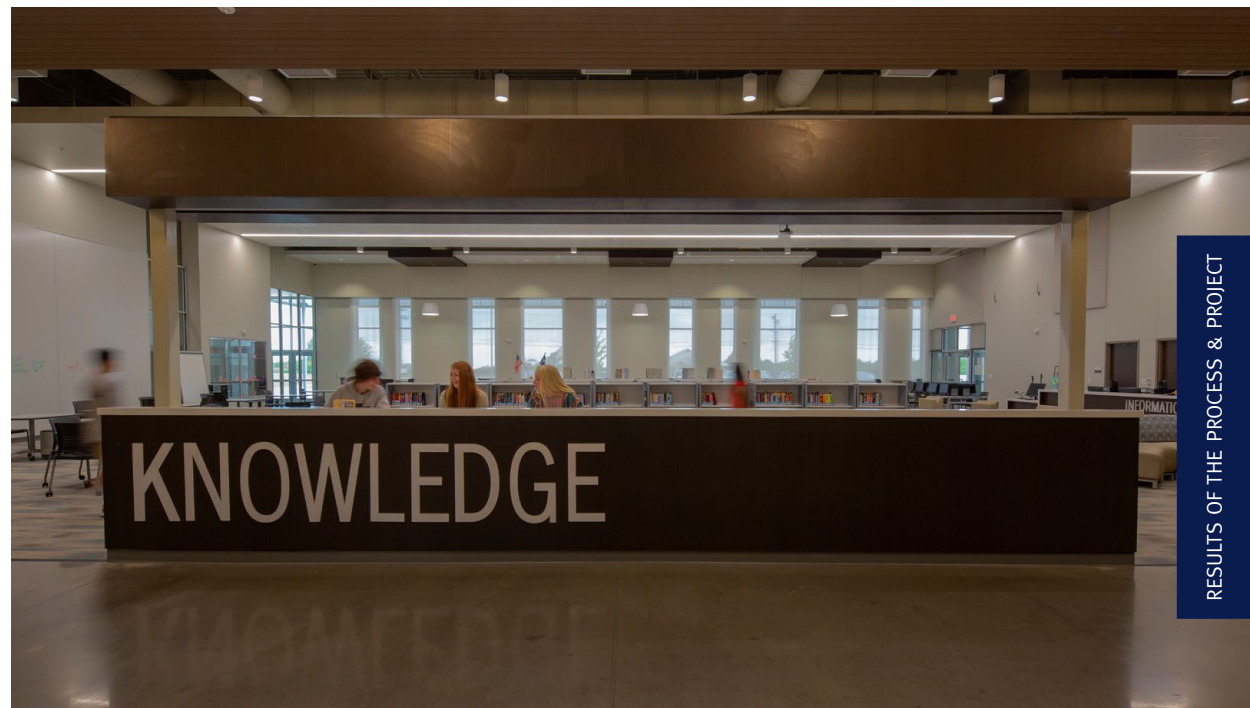


SHAPING THE FUTURE OF WISD

The new Hall Middle School is now a staple in the community and delivers a flexible and efficient environment that provides multiple opportunities for learning from the moment someone enters the school. Creating autonomy through passive supervision was an important factor to the district and community as it prepares students for their collegiate and professional experiences.

All throughout the building students experience daylight and views, connecting them to nature. The four open courtyards provide for natural light in almost every single classroom. This was an important feature that the district wanted to see in the new school as the outdoor learning areas can be used as collaborative spaces and create another outlet for learning.

The building and site respond to the district's vision for delivering 21st century curriculum, and anticipates the needs and methods for the future. Agile furniture, writable surfaces and outdoor learning areas throughout the middle school promotes collaboration through versatility. Creating multiple outlets for learning was an important factor to the district. This was all made possible by the dedication from the district and community and their investment in their students, which in turn is an investment in their future.









WIN THE DAY



SHIRLEY HALL MIDDLE SCHOOL