

ALIEF CENTER FOR

2020 LE SOLUTIONS PLANNING & DESIGN AWARDS

ADVANCED CAREERS

HOUSTON, 





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01

“ Study after study shows that not all students are meant to attend a four-year university and that through these endorsement areas, students may pursue a career of their choice. ”

– AISD Superintendent



EXECUTIVE STATEMENT



EXECUTIVE STATEMENT

Today's economic reality is that companies are looking for skilled, workforce ready employees. Many of Houston's key industries, like manufacturing, technology and healthcare, are experiencing significant shortages in the workforce. There arises a true demand for skilled candidates to fill these positions. Additionally, the workforce constantly changes because of technology and the trajectory of shifting industries. Because of this, many students entering grade school will end up working in jobs that do not yet exist.

In fall of 2016, Alief Independent School District began planning for a new state-of-the-art Career and Technical Education (CTE) center to bridge the skill gaps. This center would offer high-quality programs that not only graduate certified workers into the field quickly, but also provide students opportunities they may not otherwise have to reach the next level in pursuit of their academic and professional careers. The Center's range of unique programs would mimic the diversity of Alief's student population, providing students a purpose and passion for education.

During the planning of the Alief Center for Advanced Careers (the Center), community stakeholders envisioned a facility where students could feel like they were walking into work or higher education, not a traditional high school. The Center would be where students are exposed to future careers. Within the building, students can see not only their pathway but also a window into other campus programs, providing inspiration and interdisciplinary collaboration. The design of the building, selection of industry-standard furniture and equipment, and collaborative partnerships with businesses furthered the goal of preparing students for life after high school, which became a guiding principle throughout the entire project.

Today, the Alief Center for Advanced Careers immerses learners in real-world workforce activities via flexible learning studios that emulate today's work environments. By introducing a breadth of career paths and giving students the opportunity to earn professional accreditations, these next generation learners are motivated and inspired to work toward futures they may not have even dreamed to be possible.

"In today's world of Career and Technical Education (CTE), it is imperative that school districts provide students with industry standard experiences so that, upon graduation, they are completely prepared to enter the workforce or move on to post-secondary education," Jennifer Baker, Alief ISD's CTE Director said. "The Alief Center for Advanced Careers is doing just that. Students are getting an education in an environment that mimics real world workspaces. From the equipment to the actual space, everything is designed to prepare them for their futures. Students are not only gaining knowledge and skills, they are gaining confidence that motivates them to follow their dreams."

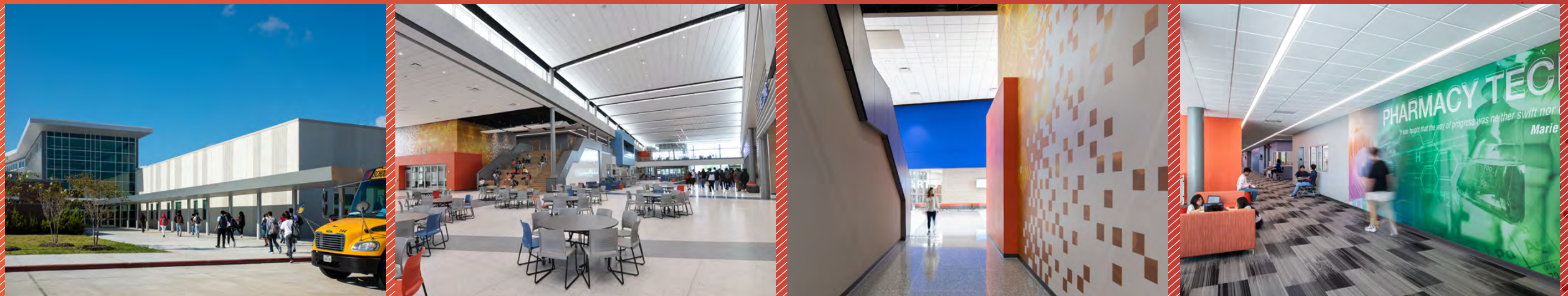
The Alief Center for Advanced Careers was designed for students walking into their future, whether that be secondary education or the workforce. As students enter the building, the possibilities are endless and their future is tangible. The design empowers the build environment to double as a learning tool with emphasis on transparency and technology.



02

“ In today’s world of Career and Technical Education (CTE), it is imperative that school districts provide students with industry standard experiences so that, upon graduation, they are completely prepared to enter the workforce or move on to post-secondary education. The Alief Center for Advanced Careers is doing just that.”

– CTE Director



SCOPE OF WORK + BUDGET

SCOPE OF WORK + BUDGET

SITE
19.2
TOTAL ACRES

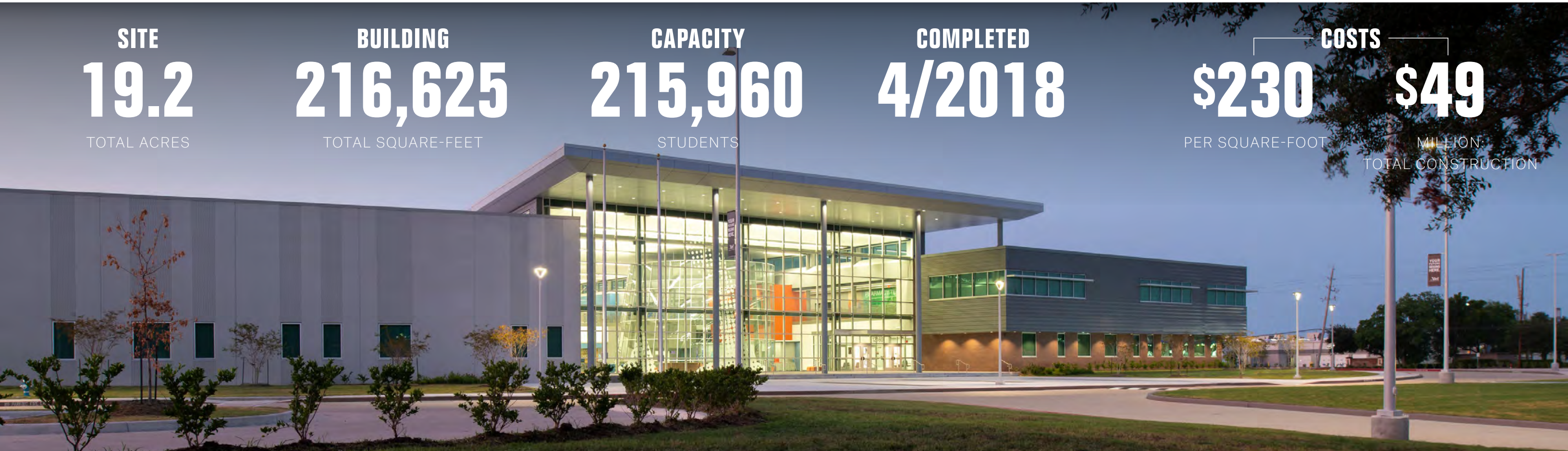
BUILDING
216,625
TOTAL SQUARE-FEET

CAPACITY
215,960
STUDENTS

COMPLETED
4/2018

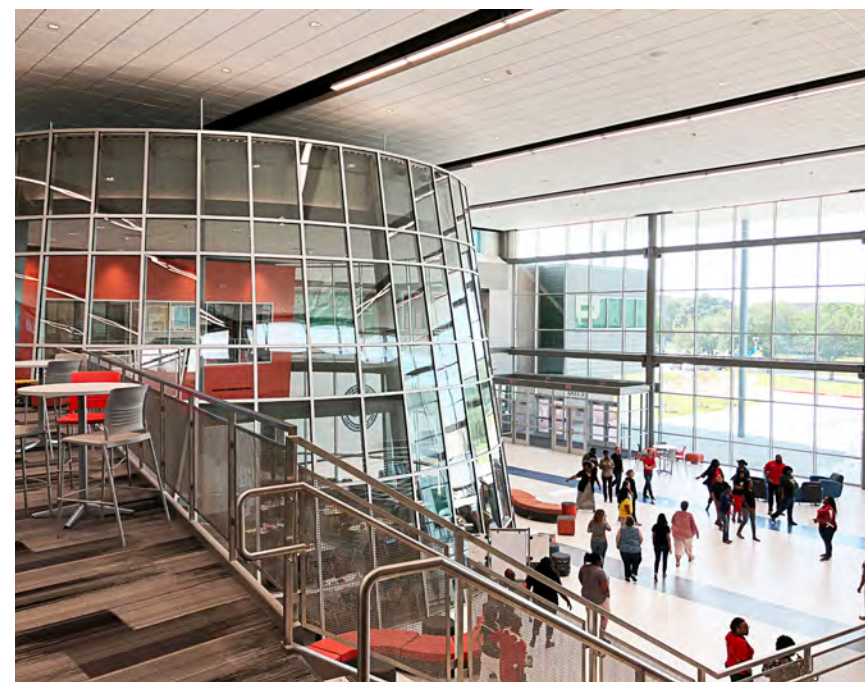
COSTS
\$230
PER SQUARE-FOOT

\$49
MILLION
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION

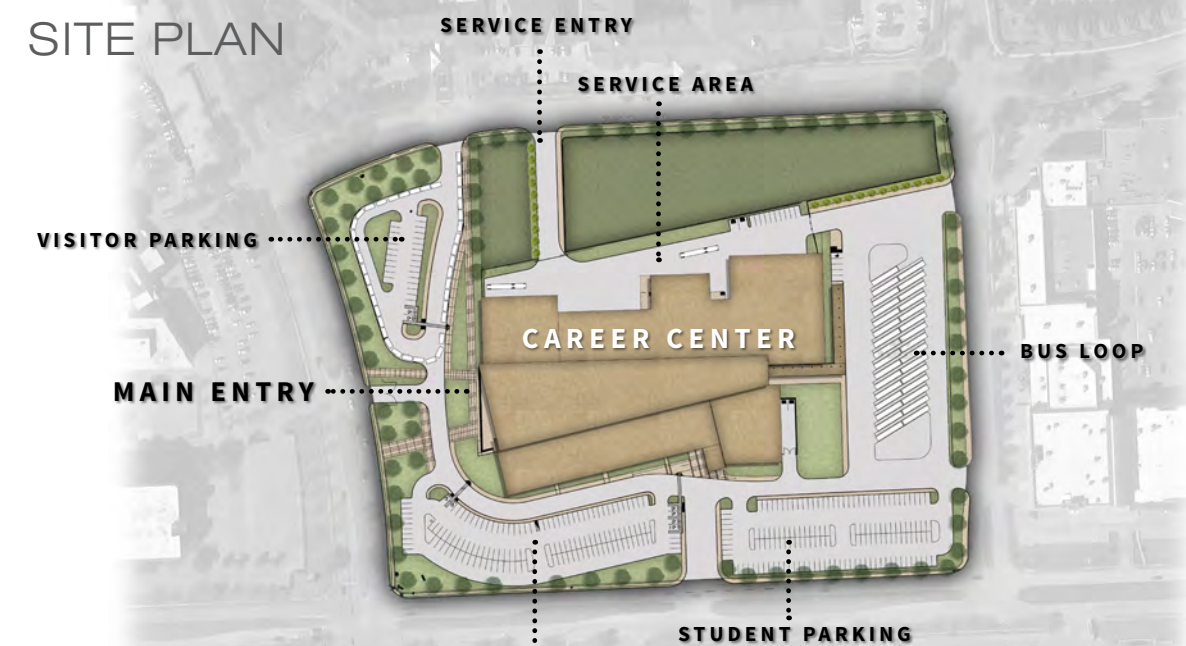


Designed to serve a capacity of 800 students in grades 9-12, the Alief Center for Advanced Careers offers students the tools to reach the next level of their academic and professional careers. This is achieved by modeling academic programs, courses and classrooms after professions and trades, giving students hands-on, real-world experience. The Center offers ten courses in advanced architectural design, automotive technology, construction technology, culinary arts, digital design, health science, industrial robotics, information technology, veterinary science, and welding. The Center also serves the community through end-user consumption. The veterinary, automotive and culinary arts programs provide real-world services for the community at large.

The Center fosters collaboration, innovation and entrepreneurship between high school students, faculty and industry partners. The building features a variety of collaboration spaces for project-based experiences, state-of-the-art prototyping and fabrication workshops, and a central interactive observation lab (IOL) for observational learning. In the Center for Advanced Careers, the creative ideas of faculty and students translate into meaningful innovations.



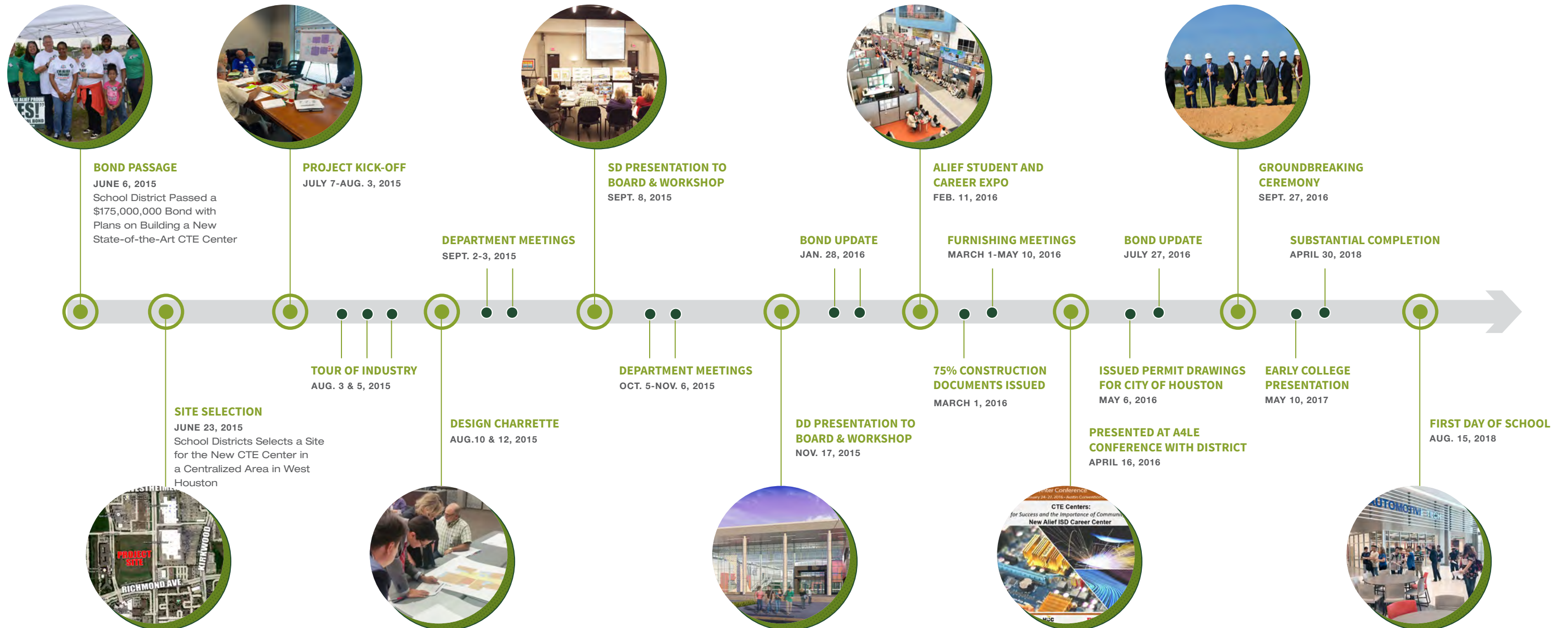
SITE PLAN





The Center embodies the motto “Your FUTURE begins here,” which signifies the visual connection that takes place as a student enters the facility. The culture at the Center is interdisciplinary and organized into industry themes where CTE teachers, academic teachers and students work together to solve real-world problems. All high school students in the district have an opportunity to apply their academic knowledge to practical skills at the Center, while adults and professionals can also learn a new trade to re-enter the workforce or mentor youth interested in their professional field.

PROJECT TIMELINE



03

“ *Our goal was to not make it look like a traditional high school, so when students bus over from their high schools for their portion of the day, that they look at it as though I’m walking into my future.* ”

– District Representative



SCHOOL + COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

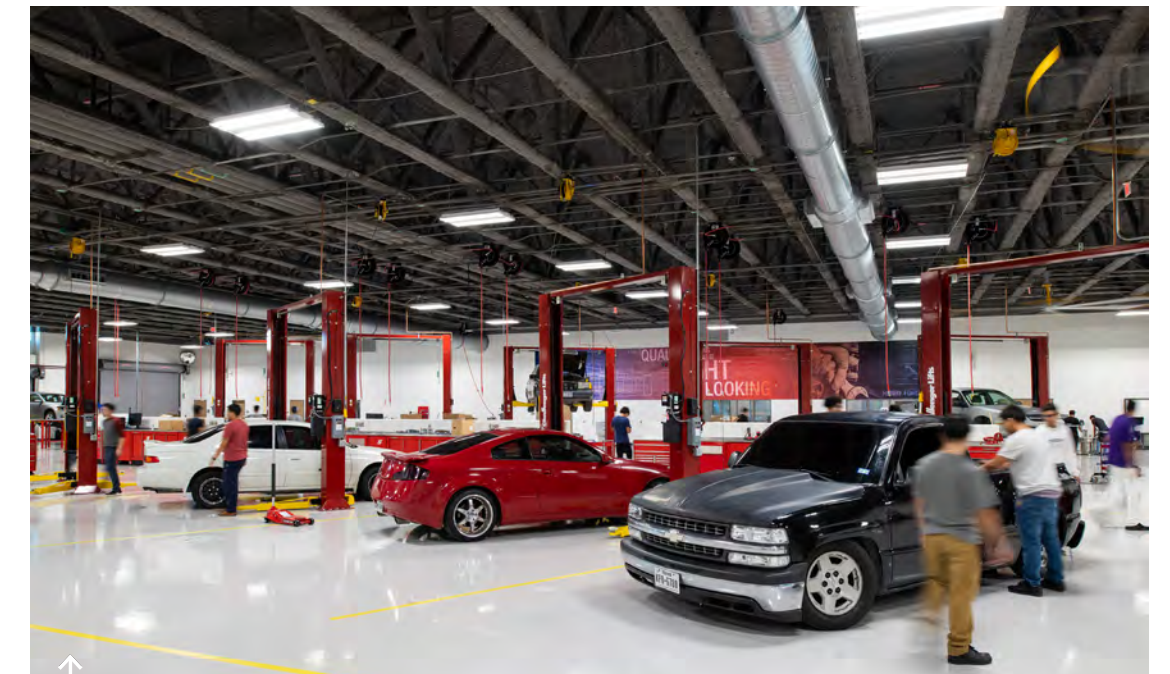
SCHOOL + COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Alief Community

CENTRALLY LOCATED in one of Houston's most diverse urban settings, the Center for Advanced Careers is situated on a previously undeveloped site on a prominent corner of Houston's Westchase District. The district covers over 36 square miles and is filled with businesses, churches and recreational facilities. Alief ISD is the most ethnically diverse school district of its size in Texas with a large array of cultures represented in its 45,000-student enrollment. Over 80 languages and dialects are spoken within the district. Statistically, more than 80 percent of the student population is African American or Hispanic.

In seventh grade, Alief ISD middle schoolers are assigned to one of the district's three high schools through a random draw process. Middle schoolers can also apply for admission into Alief's high schools of choice: Alief Early College High School and Kerr High School.

Patrick Dingrando, the former Director of Construction & Facilities for Alief ISD, emphasized that, "The District has a progressive mentality with respect to future trends in education and the workforce it needs locally. To that end, the Center for Advanced Careers will play a major role in bringing together programs from elementary to post secondary education."



Alief's students benefit from the variety of programs that the district offers, which give them opportunities to prepare for the future. With the addition of the new Center for Advanced Careers, the options expanded beyond the idea that post-secondary education is for all learners.

THE DESIGN PROCESS

Value of Process and Project to Community at Large



The process engaged more than 5,000 stakeholders and took nine (9) months to complete.

FROM THE BEGINNING, the design of the Center focused on the community. The building's planning and design resulted from collaboration and synergy with district staff, industry partners, community colleges, bond committee members and students. The input of these stakeholders led the conversations and methods surrounding the design process.

During the community workshops, district administrators, board members and the entire design committee team toured various CTE centers throughout the Houston area. These included the Miller Career & Technology Center in Katy ISD, the Guthrie Center in Spring Branch ISD, Dr. Kirk Lewis Career & Technical High School in Pasadena ISD and several professional commercial establishments. This primary research refined the district's vision for a future career center and provided

valuable inspiration and lessons learned. These tours solidified the vision for a building where students felt like they were going to work and not school.

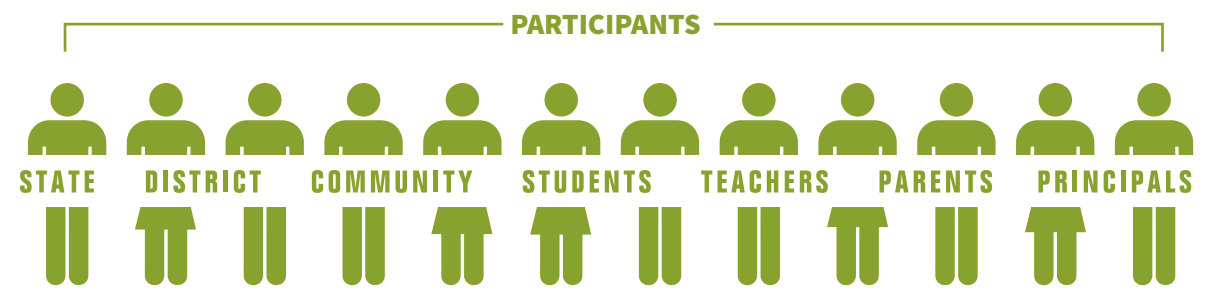
"As one would expect, technology has played a vital role in both the design and ultimate product [of the career center]," former Alief ISD Director of Construction and Facilities Patrick Dingrando noted. "The 3-D virtual animation of the building's interior and exterior was dramatically amplified when experienced through PBK's Ocular goggles. This really brought to life the design in a very personal and realistic way. It has been instrumental in bringing the design to life for the shareholders even before construction has begun. The tours and 3-D animations really helped career center team members to clearly observe crucial areas of the building to make design modifications which has resulted in a stronger holistic product. The buy-in from the district and bond steering committee members on the design has superseded our expectations."



The district engaged the community by hosting summits to start the conversation, followed by focus groups of students, parents, community members and district staff to expand on ideas and challenge old paradigms



District stakeholders gave input that contributed to the final building design



PLANNING FOR CAREER PATHWAYS

To effectively accomplish the prioritized objectives following the tour of industry and community workshops, the district published an online survey to gather additional community feedback. This extra step in the planning process provided transparency and inclusivity between the district and the community.

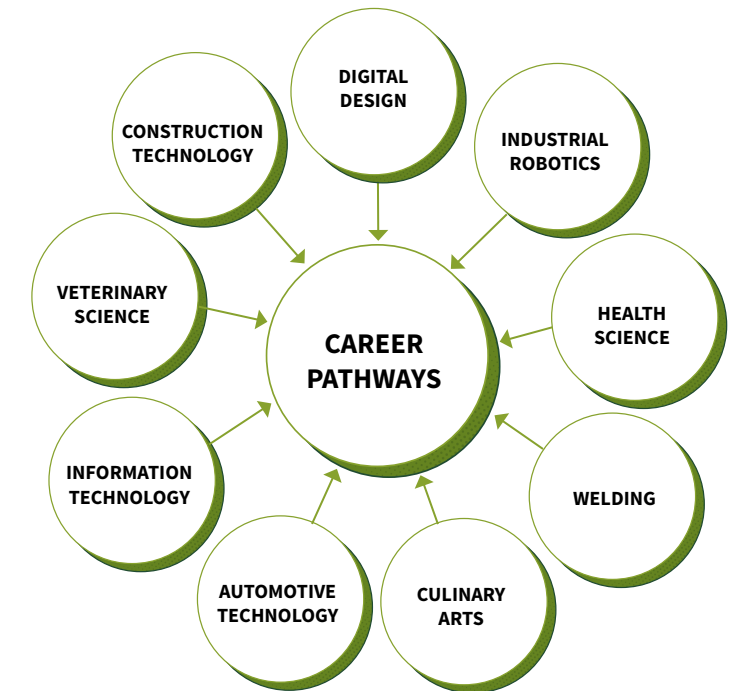


District departments use the digital design studio for classes. Local businesses use the bistro to host lunches, with food prepared by students. In November 2019, the Texas Association of School Boards ate a meal at the Center.



Junior Achievement's BizTown for fourth to sixth graders uses the career center's space to give students a hands-on experiment of entrepreneurship, financial literacy and work readiness with the Center's programs as a backdrop of many of those very industries

From each step in the process, the goal became clear: design a career center where students will walk into a building that depicts their future. Key elements of the future career center emerged from the research: transparency, technology and using the building as a learning tool. These three key takeaways became foundational in the design of the building. Stakeholders' united around the desire for the space to not only prepare students to serve the Alief community but for the building to be a shared communal space.



The West Houston Medical Institute rents the IOL (interactive observation lab) for nurse training



The Center is used to host conferences, seminars and public speaking events



From the early days at BizTown to graduating the career center with an applicable certification in hand, the Center ensures that students know their potential. They are sent into the community with the skills to succeed, increasing their marketability in a competitive workforce.

Through this integration into every aspect of the Alief community – from elementary school to the collegiate level – the Center for Advanced Careers ensures that students come to the building with their future in mind.

Currently, the Center for Advanced Careers is utilized by the community in two ways. First, the Center's programs function as local businesses. A community member can make an appointment for vet tech students to groom their pet, grab a bite at the bistro or get their car repaired by automotive students. These CTE spaces within the building serve the community through the services they can provide. Second, the community can use areas of the building for events, trainings and other organized gatherings because of the flexibility of design.

CHALLENGES

WHEN THE PROJECT BEGAN, the district had established a preliminary building program. The building program, in conjunction with the jurisdictional requirements for parking, bus parking, service yards and the need for detention, proved to be far greater than the footprint for the site.



Collaboratively, the group decided to centralize all programs and provide direct access off a central Main Street. By entering the labs directly and modifying the circulation, the building ended up reducing square footage by 25,000 square-feet without modifying a single instructional space. Secondly, the demands of the site needed to be evaluated. By combining service yards for each of the pathways with the main service yard serving the campus, the site footprint was dramatically reduced and allowed for joint uses and collaboration between programs. Since many students would be commuting to the campus on a bus from their home high school, the jurisdiction granted a parking variance.

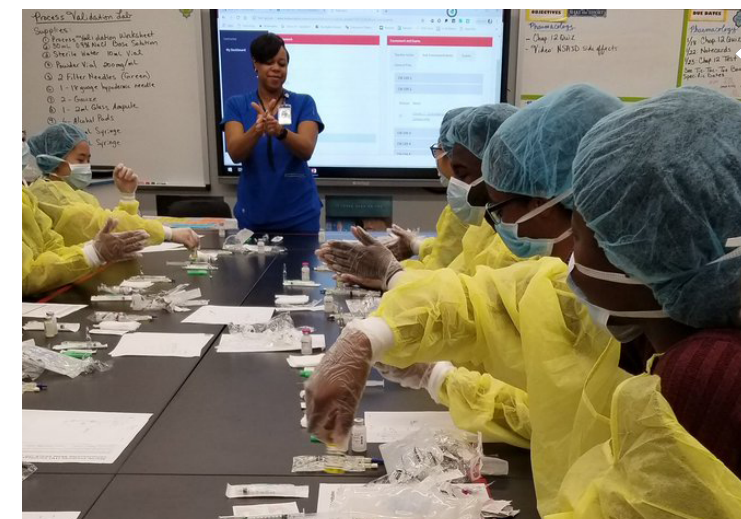
There are always varied challenges associated with all projects. Challenges can be associated with undefined goals or clear vision, programming, budgeting, site constraints, market conditions and lack of community support. This project experienced few, if any, major challenges in these areas. Alief ISD had a clear vision and overwhelming community support, allowing the project team to address challenges in a collaborative manner and continue to focus on the district's goal.

KEY ASSETS



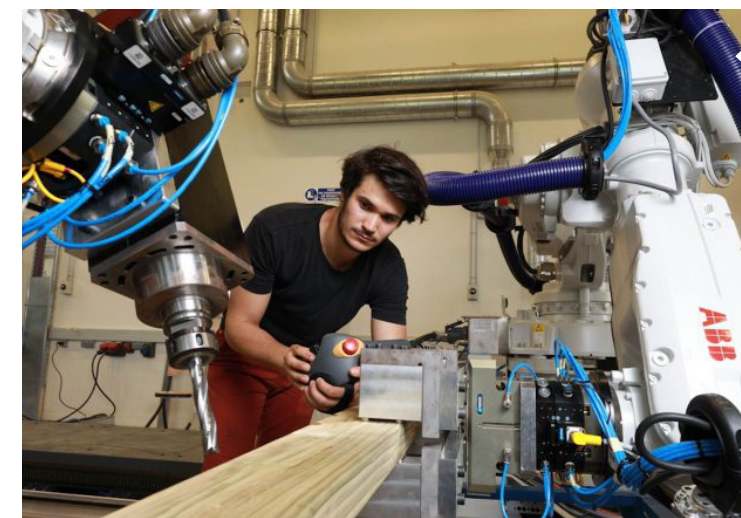
UNIFYING THE COMMUNITY AND DISTRICT

Through community partnerships, the Alief Center for Advanced Careers modeled its academic programs, courses and classrooms after professions and trades relevant to current real-world demand. The relationship with the community solidified with the completion of the building. This has led to on-site mentorships, hands-on workshops with industry-specific professionals and future internships. Through the career center, Alief ISD partners with Houston Community College and West Houston Medical Center.



MARKETABLE STUDENTS

Partnerships with the Alief community and the tools within the Center reinforce the overall goal of preparing learners for the future. A Center for Advanced Careers graduate will leave with applicable certification(s), experience in an industry standard environment and guidance from qualified teachers. Because of these skills, Center graduates are equipped for success in their community.



MEETING LOCAL WORKFORCE DEMAND

Because of the array of opportunities students receive at the Center, they gain the skillset for future jobs that do not yet exist. This real-world experience sets a graduate of the Alief Center for Advanced Careers apart from his/her peers.

04

“ Students are getting an education in an environment that mimics real world work spaces. From the equipment to the actual space, everything is designed to prepare them for their futures. Students are not only gaining knowledge and skills, they are gaining confidence that motivates them to follow their dreams. ”

– CTE Director



EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

A NETWORK OF SUPPORT

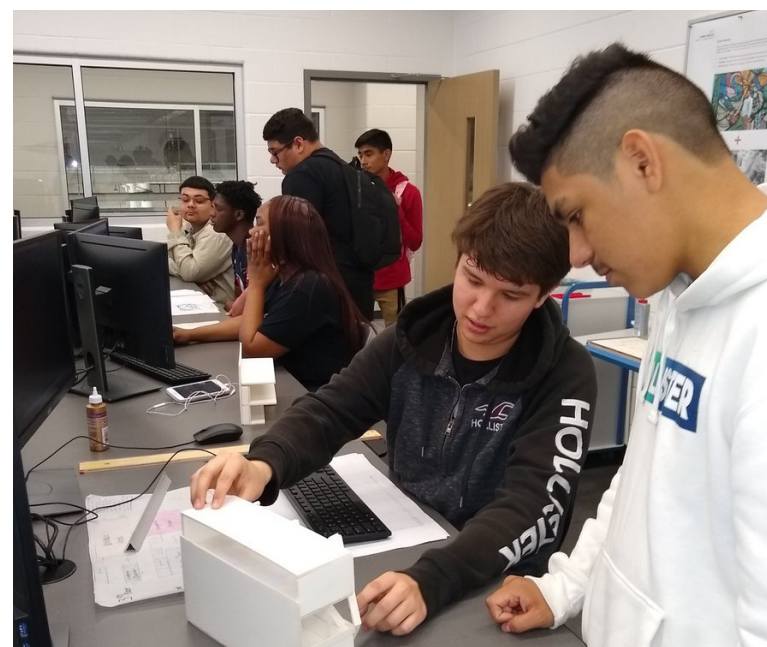
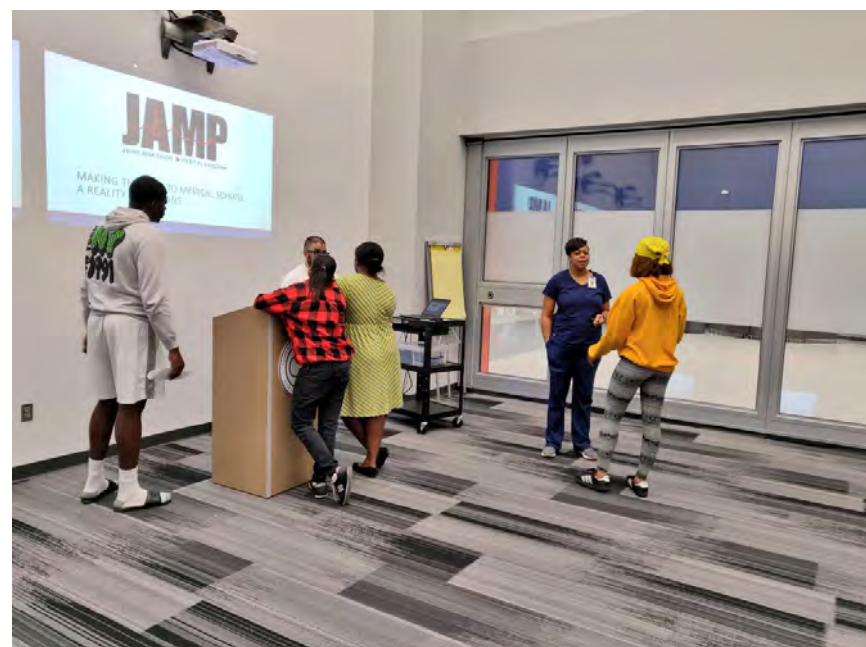
Educational Vision & Goals

THE DISTRICT'S VISION WAS TO DESIGN a school to prepare students for the careers of tomorrow. The environment at the Center emulates the industry so students can seamlessly transition from their program directly into secondary education or industry of choice.

Because many future jobs are yet to even be invented, much planning and discussion went into the design behind the Center. Taking the three core ideas -- transparency, technology and the building as a learning tool -- the Center offers an array of diverse and unique programs, mirroring the diversity of the student population, to meet the needs of the community.

The Center's purpose aligns with Alief ISD's outlined goals:

- Closing the achievement gap
- College and career preparation
- Safe and orderly environment
- Qualified, effective personnel
- Positive stakeholder relationships



← Middle school students from the district can participate in courses that will build the pathway for them to one day attend classes at the Center. With the help of a career assessment recommendation and a transition counselor, they can work on a four-year plan to prepare them for courses both in high school and at the Center. Middle school parents can also tour the facilities at the Center for Advanced Careers, ensuring that parents are knowledgeable about their child's educational options when going into high school.

CREATING A SENSE OF PLACE

How Environment Supports Curriculum

THE CENTRAL VISION OF THE CENTER was to create an environment built upon transparency, technology and building as a learning tool. The campus design displays the real-world education taking place to inspire students on campus as well as visitors to the school. The building is designed around a central Main Street with technology, graphics and windows into the labs for each program. The goal was for students to understand industries outside of their own field of study and look for ways to innovate and collaborate.



TRANSPARENCY

Students and teachers have a heightened sense of connection to activities and instruction taking place in all areas of the Center. Extensive use of glass provides transparent learning. A barrier-free environment encourages innovation and opportunities to visually interact and connect within the learning environment. This transparency also promotes cross-collaboration between students and programs as well as inspire visitors to the campus.

According to the district's CTE Director Jennifer Baker, promoting transparency was an important way to create a professional environment for students and to encourage teamwork. "We wanted all pathways to have eyes on each other," she said, "so some classrooms and conference rooms are fully glazed. An open common area with visual access to the dining hall, classroom, administrative offices and computer lab also fosters off-the-cuff collaboration. Additionally, by exposing the space's original columns, steel bracing and its polished concrete floor, the design was able to maintain an industrial feel, rather than an academic one."



The building supports exhibition display and presentation of work in multiple ways—through creation of open spaces to accommodate large and small groups, strategic adjacencies, spaces that support a range of activities and by creating layers of transparency. Exhibition spaces create places to display student work, inform students of current interest-specific research and allow students and teachers to view the work of others in their community.

CREATING A SENSE OF PLACE

How Environment Supports Curriculum (continued)

TECHNOLOGY

Access to power and data is essential for using the entire building for instruction and collaboration. Main Street, as well as every corridor and collaboration space, is filled with power to allow students to charge and work on their devices. Interactive televisions are spread out around the entire campus so students can collaborate in small groups before or after school or during class breakout times. To encourage the use of technological resources, the Digital Learning Department awards teachers with a Certificate for Excellence in Technology to those who use technology well in the classroom.



CTE classes feature advanced technology and equipment for students to create innovative design and fabrication projects. Ubiquitous and flexible technology is a significant component of the Center's design. Specifically, the technology and media arts programs use hands on and technology rich applications, including digital video production, coding and application development and robotics. Technology is not just applied to the information technology and digital design programs but can be found throughout the building, including a welding robotic arm, CNC machine, sophisticated automotive alignment tool and health science "smart" mannequins



Digital displays at the entry to each program, as well as a large digital array in the center of Main Street, show the work and milestones occurring in each discipline. These displays promote energy, excitement and awareness of what is happening around the school.



Conference rooms and every classroom are equipped with the latest technology, including 80+” interactive televisions so students can give digital presentations to peers, mentors and community partners.



Wireless technology is available throughout the building. Each student is issued a device at the start of the year.

BUILDING AS A LEARNING TOOL

From personalized learning to large group instruction, all types of learning can occur throughout the entire campus, not just in the classroom. During the design process, the district encouraged the mindset that every inch of the campus should be conducive for collaboration and instruction. To achieve this vision, technology, furniture and operable and writable walls are intentionally utilized. Students can learn anywhere, anytime.



FURNITURE

Furniture for the Center came out of numerous collaborative meetings with instruction, industry and purchasing discussions. The furniture in the classrooms and labs needed to be flexible but also replicate industry furniture. Computer labs needed height adjustable chairs with wheels, construction required stools and health science needed stainless lab tables. The same attention to furniture was found down Main Street and in all collaboration spaces. Flexible and mobile furniture allows students to gather in small or larger groups. The power-filled "genius" bar flanking both sides of Main Street caters to students interested in individual workspace. Furniture is a valuable tool in the campus' landscape of learning.

The building functions cohesively, much like the curriculum of the Center, ensuring a relevant, realistic learning environment that capitalizes on the needs of the modern high school student.



WALLS

Walls in the Center are not just used for distinction of spaces, they are also essential for collaboration and flexibility. Operable glass walls throughout the campus provide the flexibility to separate spaces for intimate learning or expand spaces for larger programs and instruction. One key example is the interactive observation lab (IOL). The main lab can be closed for instruction and demonstration or can open into the Main Street plaza and allow for observation or even transportation of a vehicle from automotive tech. Walls throughout the campus are also used for spontaneous collaboration. Walls down the corridors all have tackable wall surfaces to display student work or for quick pin-up space to discuss projects. Writable walls in conference spaces and on Main Street create spaces for sketching and innovation. The glass operable walls can also be used as dry-erase walls.

WALKING INTO THE REAL WORLD

How Environment Supports Variety of Learning & Teaching Styles Through Adaptability & Flexibility

THE FACILITY MUST NOT ONLY MEET the needs for the students and careers of today but must be flexible enough to accommodate jobs of the future. To accomplish this, student learning styles must be considered. Because the Center functions outside of the typical high school experience, the building fosters an environment where students practice learning styles that are most effective for them. The environment supports learning through watching, learning through doing, learning through collaboration and learning through standard curriculum in a technology-rich environment.

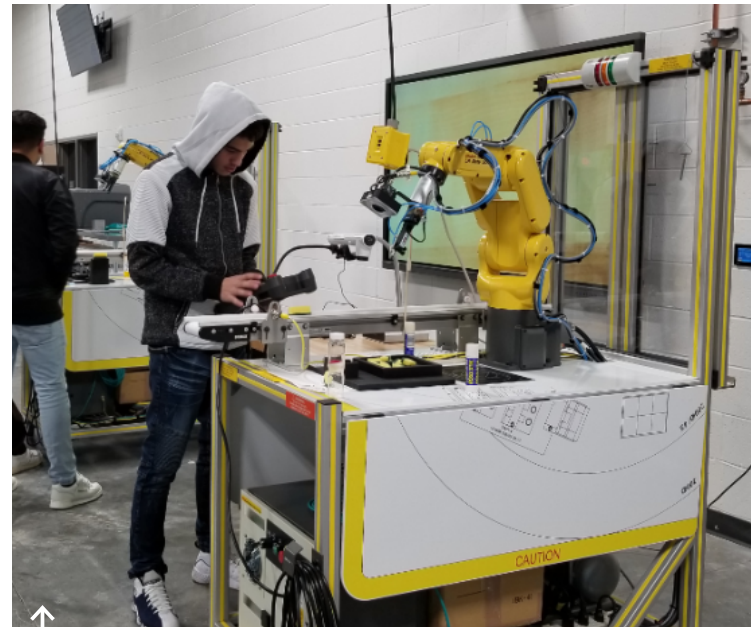
LEARNING THROUGH WATCHING



The transparency of the building's design, including the IOL, create spaces that optimize the student learning experience through watching activities and presentations.

Prospective students can learn through watching. The building itself was designed to be toured. Middle school students can walk through the campus and watch classes in action without interrupting learning, seeing a glimpse of the possibilities that exist for their futures. This ease of accessibility to peer into learning environments highlights the transparency of the building and even the passive action of watching can be educational and inspiring.

LEARNING THROUGH DOING



At the core of the Center for Advanced Careers, active learning promotes ownership and independence in students.

Because the Center's curriculum focuses on careers, physically working is integral to both learning and teaching styles. Without tools to for culinary class or automotive class, there are limitations on learning capabilities. Many health science students spend only a portion of their week at the campus and the remainder at the hospital in a job shadow program. It was for this reason that the educational environment needed to replicate the professional environment and provide appropriate training and seamless transition from school to work.

LEARNING THROUGH COLLABORATION



Along Main Street, furniture is broken into smaller pods for students to group together, allowing learning and collaboration to occur organically in these common areas. The agile furniture can be used, moved and repurposed in the years to come as the vision and purpose of the Center changes to align as needs, trends and standards evolve.

The building provides adaptive space to accommodate a wide range of interdisciplinary classes and project types. Interior space consists primarily of large, open, adaptive spaces which can be reconfigured easily and support a wide variety of uses. Assigned project spaces and meeting spaces are enclosed with demountable partition which can be reconfigured over time, preserving the building's future versatility.

LEARNING THROUGH A TECHNOLOGY-RICH CURRICULUM



Technology is integrated throughout the building. Each space - from shops to learning studios - are filled with engaging and immersive technology.

Technology fills the campus to ensure any wall can be used for instruction and any corner can be used for small group collaboration. Because the Center prepares students for careers that do not even exist yet, curriculum and teaching environments continually change to meet the needs of the students and the community. For example, in 2019, the Center became the first automotive program in Texas with an official vehicle inspection station, all thanks to certified instructor Mr. Matt Hardy.

05

“If you really want to experience Alief’s Center for Advanced Careers, you’re going to want to bring your car for an oil change, walk over to the bistro and have lunch while you drop off your dog to get groomed and cared for. For about two to three hours, you can have a lot of fun at this center. ☺☺

– CTE Director



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

CENTERED AROUND STUDENT SUCCESS

Physical Attributes

THE CENTER'S DESIGN was dictated by the district's visionary goal to effectively prepare students for real-world workforce careers and post-secondary education. The aesthetics and materials of the building represent the diversity of the program. The building is divided into two areas, the "cleaner programs" like information technology, health science and digital design and the "dirtier" programs like vet tech, automotive tech, welding and construction. The materials and character of the building follow the function of the programs. The clean side of the building emulates a modern tech building with insulated metal panels, modern masonry and finishes. The dirty side of the Center looks like industrial warehouses with insulated tilt-wall panels, sealed concrete floors and exposed structure. The desired outcome is a destination where students feel like their successes are driven by a potential career, not their homework.

The Center's CTE classes contain classrooms and labs that mirror real work environments and provide students an advantage in forming career expectations and skillsets. As students pass classes at the Center, they can acquire certifications and licenses needed in their professions and complete certification tests in the Center's certified testing lab.

The CTE academies are the heartbeat of the school. A few key areas within them include:



Auto tech area has 14 lifts where students learn how to change oil and replace and repair auto parts and cars



A mill and cabinet-making area allows students to work with wood



A welding shop includes a commercial CNC machine and welding robotic arm



A simulation hospital room contains beds and technology where advanced dummies can be programmed to simulate certain medical conditions like cardiac arrest



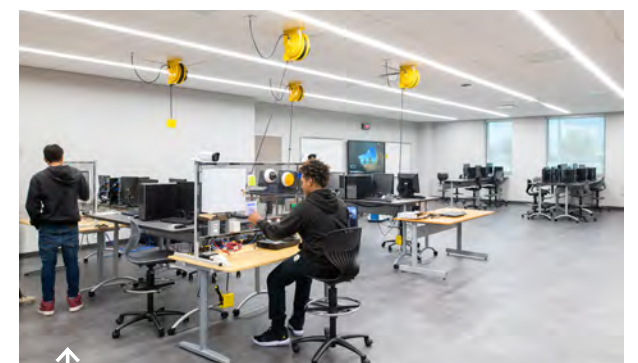
A makerspace is used for industrial robotics classes



The commercial kitchen feeds into the student-run bistro, where the community can eat meals prepared by students as well as a student-run café to serve students on campus



The building includes a broadcast station with an audio booth, greenscreen and studio cameras



A series of information technology labs include a simulation network operations center

THE CENTRAL COMMUNAL PLAZA

THE CENTER FOR ADVANCED CAREERS is an open and light-filled building, designed to encourage encounters between students and faculty across disciplines. Unifying the building is a two-story central communal plaza or Main Street, which draws students and faculty in from all directions. Conceived as a hybrid of collaboration space, the building design is organized around a central communal plaza, which serves as collision nodes for informal meetings and information exchange across departments.



This central area minimizes the need for circulation hallways, optimizing a very compact plan that reduces energy consumption and promotes cross-pollination of programs. The communal plaza brings natural light deep into the building, creating a spacious, airy and light filled interior and a continuous connection with learning taking place in the CTE workshops.

Located in the heart of the Center is the Interactive Observation Laboratory (IOL), a key multi-purpose area of the school. The conceptual purpose of the IOL is to act as a surgical amphitheater where students can sit in the second-floor observation room and watch medical procedures take place in the center of the space below. The IOL is filled with power, data, water and even compressed air to allow for maximum use and flexibility. Operable glass partitions make it easy to accommodate any program on campus. The automotive program, as well as others, can open the partitions, allowing instructors to wheel in large pieces of equipment to work and demonstrate inside the space while students observe from above. The IOL can be used for instructional purposes by any of the 10 different program fields that the Center offers. Its exceptional duality makes it a key feature that the design team recognized the Center needed.



THE COMMUNITY'S CENTER

How the facility fits in the larger context of the community

THE CENTER WAS DESIGNED with 270 degrees of views to the community, allowing autonomy and a unique identity for each program. Automotive, vet tech and the bistro each have exterior public entrances. Located near businesses, hospitals, a community college and major roads, the Center is a both a physical and metaphorical representation of innovation and progress within the community, making it a local icon. The Center exposes students to businesses and aspects of the community they would not otherwise experience at their attendance-zoned high school.



The local area benefits from the Center's unique and diverse offerings. The Center prioritizes public service and delivers community access. Using Google Forms, the general public can sign their animal up for a prescreening, set an appointment for a vehicle inspection or reserve their dine-in or carry-out meal from the bistro. The Center became the first automotive program in Texas with an official vehicle inspection station in 2019.

"If you really want to experience Alief's Center for Advanced Careers, you're going to want to bring your car for an oil change, walk over to the bistro and have lunch while you drop off your dog to get groomed and cared for," said Jennifer Baker, Alief ISD's career and technical education co-director. "For about two to three hours, you can have a lot of fun at this center."

Community outreach generates a series of annual events such as Junior Achievement's BIZTown, blood drives, Wellness First and STEM Day. The student-run bistro is an asset to the Center as well, hosting groups of people such as the Gulf Coast Career and Technical Association, HCA Houston Healthcare West and Superintendent's Council VIP Meeting.



A LAUNCH PAD FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

How the Center Inspires and Motivates



EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS CENTERED around a standard high school to college trajectory limits many students. The Center for Advanced Careers opens doors to the future and gives students practical application of their academics, progressing their career path. Career and college readiness are at the forefront of every lesson plan and activity at the Center, providing students with a competitive advantage as they graduate and advance into the next step of their future.

Because of the partnerships and community involvement of the Center, students can participate in competitions and activities that would not be possible otherwise. For example, digital design students create Alief ISD's monthly podcast, ImpactED, with Superintendent HD Chambers, integrating their skills into the heartbeat of the district. Talking about anything from college scholarships to after-school enrichment programs, the podcast furthers the district's mission of preparing students for tomorrow by caring for them today, even outside of the classroom walls. Allowing CTE students to be part of this podcasting process gives them influence that extends beyond the district boundaries.

Through using transparency, technology and the building as a learning tool, the Alief Center for Advanced Careers gives students the tools they need to succeed as they walk into their future.

06

“ *The design of the Alief Center for Advanced Careers just naturally inspires those who enter. On the first day of school, when the students entered the building, they were astonished. From the architecture to the graphics to the furnishings, their eyes were wide and smiles were big. Watching these students talk about the Center and all it has to offer is gratifying because it is evident that they are truly proud to be a student in this amazing building.* ”

– CTE Director



RESULTS OF THE PROCESS + PROJECT



RESULTS OF THE PROCESS + PROJECT

PURPOSEFUL AND PRACTICAL

How the Center achieves educational goals and objectives

THE ULTIMATE GOAL of the Center for Advanced Careers is to prepare students for the future, whether that be directly into an industry or a two- or four-year degree. The Center achieves this goal by providing an innovative, purposefully designed space and practical instruction. With these assets, students are equipped for their future.

Since the Center's opening in the fall of 2018, the students of Alief ISD have not only graduated with experience in a state-of-the-art facility, but they have obtained over 194 student certifications annually that provide them with recognized benchmarks of skillsets far beyond the classroom including:



The tools and features of each class also highlight the importance of pushing students towards their future like allowing them to work on vehicles with professional partners, create a broadcast quality podcast and AV productions, learn the fine points of culinary arts in a restaurant-style kitchen or practice nursing skills with the technical support of medical professionals.

Many of the details in the Center further educational goals by creating an inspirational, optimistic setting. Even the Main Street's light, textures, color and collaboration areas create a multifaceted educational environment.

MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS, MEANINGFUL WORK

How the project achieves school district goals

ALIEF ISD'S MISSION STATEMENT is to “provide an exemplary education for all students in a safe environment” in collaboration with parents and the community. The district values student achievement and development, along with meaningful relationships and meaningful work. With the values of meaningful relationships and work through student achievement and development, students, staff and the community accomplish these goals at the Center.

The Center’s purpose aligns with the goals of Alief ISD, whose district goals are outlined, along with how the Center meets these goals:



CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Through ensuring education for all students, whether they choose to pursue college or the workforce after graduating high school



COLLEGE AND CAREER PREPARATION

Through giving students hands-on classes and spaces to experience and experiment with what they want their future to look like



SAFE AND ORDERLY ENVIRONMENT

Through a career center focused on transparency, technology and using the building as a learning tool



QUALIFIED, EFFECTIVE PERSONNEL

Through advocating for every student by hiring teachers with the expertise to teach in a real-world environment as well as student mentorships with students and leaders in their field of interest



POSITIVE STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS

Through engaging the community in the design process and opening the doors of the Center for community use



PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

How the project achieves community goals

The Center has proven to increase the percentage of students who graduate high school with a plan for their future – in the workforce or in higher education. According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), 72 percent of Alief ISD students from the 2017-2018 school year were college and career ready. After only one year of the Center being open, the TEA concluded that 85 percent of Alief ISD students from the 2018-2019 school year were college and career ready, a 13 percent increase from the previous school year. By providing the opportunity to explore different professional careers and practice in trades/ industries that appeal to them, high school students are motivated and inspired to work towards their future. The Center is an active resource for students and the community and helps provide an educated workforce by preparing students with the knowledge and skills they will need.

The Center is designed for effective community usage. The transparency, technology and usage of the building as a learning tool allow for the Center to host a 21st century meeting, seminar or presentation. Furthermore, the central location of the building allows it to be a focal point within the community

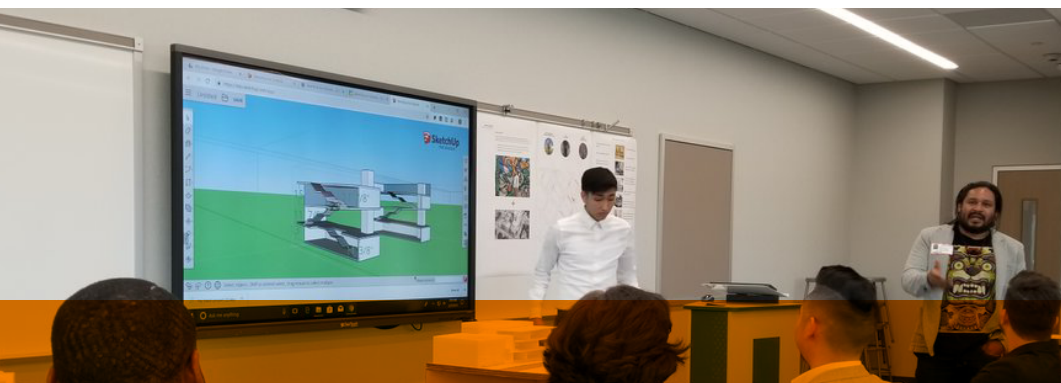


BEYOND THE BUILDING WALLS

Unintended Results and Achievements of the Process and Project

One of the unintended achievements is the success of the Digital Design Program and the work produced within the Broadcast Studio. The students of the Broadcast Studio create a monthly podcast, *ImpactedED*, hosted by Alief ISD Superintendent HD Chambers. Superintendent Chambers speaks with guests from all walks of life about issues affecting education and the future of America. To date, the students have produced 50 podcasts with many relevant K-12 discussion topics.

The Alief Center for Advanced Careers is a place of limitless opportunities. The building functions cohesively, similar to the Center's curriculum, ensuring a relevant, realistic learning environment that meets the needs of the modern high school student. At the Center, a variety of unique programs mirror the diversity of the student population. This space empowers students, enhances a community and elevates the future of bright, young individuals for generations to come. The concept and culture of the Center embody its motto, "Your Future Begins Here." The Center is both a physical and symbolic representation of endless possibilities, shaping leaders for the careers of tomorrow.



ANNUAL STUDENT CERTIFICATIONS

475

AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY

65

CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY

64

CULINARY ARTS

43

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

106

INDUSTRIAL WELDING

23

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

18

VETERINARY SCIENCE

112

HEALTH SCIENCE