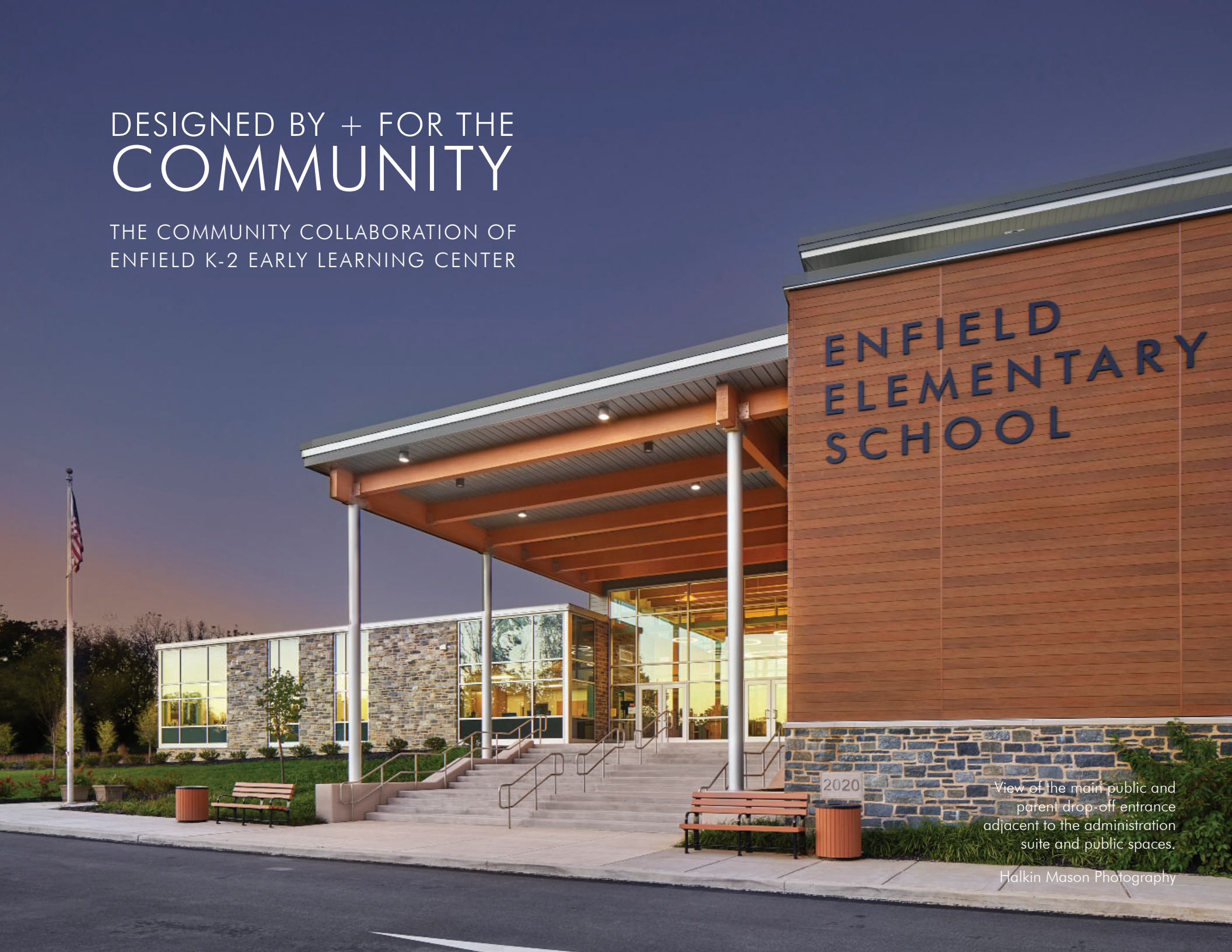
DESIGNED BY + FOR THE COMMUNITY

THE COMMUNITY COLLABORATION OF ENFIELD K-2 EARLY LEARNING CENTER



View of the main public and parent drop-off entrance adjacent to the administration suite and public spaces.

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The main public and parent drop-off entrance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Enfield K-2 Early Learning Center (ELC) is a recently constructed early childhood elementary school located in the greater Philadelphia suburban area. The new 105,000 SF learning facility accommodates 750 students. Through the consensus-based community workshop process, the design of the facility was centered around student learning in an inviting and nurturing environment and created a sense of community for the students and their teachers.

The design establishes a hierarchy of the public and private zones. The main entrance adjacent to the administration area anchors the interior street connection to access the gymnasium/stage and cafeteria. The street connection leads to the central core of the building featuring the learning resource/ STEAM programs and a learning stair. The private educational areas of the facility can be secured to allow the public areas to be used after school hours.

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The main entrance is a secured entry monitored by the administration office and anchors the interior main street connection to access the public spaces through to the central core of the building.

SCOPE OF WORK + BUDGET

Faced with an aging K-1 primary center and a 2-5 elementary center at capacity, the School District of Springfield Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania addressed both issues with the design of a new 105,000 SF K-2 Early Learning Center (ELC) for 750 students. Completed in 2020 at a construction cost of $34.4M including sitework, the District's grade structure was re-aligned to grades K-2 and 3-5 at two schools. The former K-1 center was closed and its site re-purposed for athletic fields.

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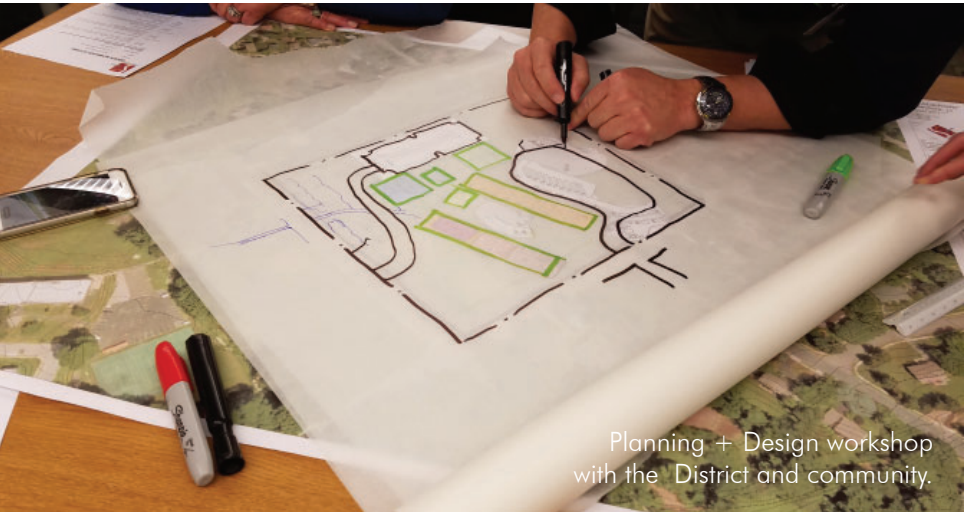
Off of the parent drop-off loop and directly adjacent to the main parking lots, the primary building entrance provides direct access to the public spaces including the Multi-Purpose Room (Gymnasium/Stage) and Dining Commons.

SCHOOL + COMMUNITY RESEARCH +/OR ENGAGEMENT

THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY | The School District of Springfield Township in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania is the nucleus of the community. The district was comprised of just four schools (K-1, 2-5, 6-8 and 9-12) in which the students began and completed their education together, which is an anomaly in public education and something very special to this community. The K-1 Primary School was in need of substantial renovations and not designed to support 21st Century instruction. The 2-5 Elementary School was over capacity. The new 105,000 SF K-2 ELC serves as a replacement for the K-1 Center and pulls one grade out of the 2-5 facility to provide additional capacity. The reconfigured K-2/3-5 grade structure provided the District with new opportunities to tailor instruction to targeted age groupings and to enhance student-centered approaches to instruction.

DESIGNED BY + FOR THE COMMUNITY | The new Enfield K-2 ELC was designed by the community, for the community. As the center of the community, it was important to the District to include community representatives in the project's design process. Multiple design workshops were held with community stakeholders, including parents, teachers, township representatives, neighbors, and students. Design charettes laid the foundation for organizing the site and building relative to the academic and public zones. Site access points, vehicular and bus circulation, parking, the adjacencies of the public spaces (multi- purpose room and cafeteria), instructional areas, and configuration of classroom wings all resulted from the input provided by the community during these collaborative design workshops.

Planning + Design workshop with the District and community.



Planning + Design workshop
with the District and community.

EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT DESIGN

VISIONS + GOALS | The configuration of the classroom wings was the collective vision conceived in design workshops by the students, parents, faculty, community members, and township officials.

The concept to wrap the classroom clusters or wings around the outdoor learning courtyard symbolizes the embrace of the students and was the catalyst for the final design concept.

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The main public and parent drop-off entrance.

NEXT GENERATION LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS | The space design of the new ELC supports a variety of instructional and learning opportunities. Classroom instruction and small and large-group spaces support project-based and personalized learning opportunities, differentiated instruction, the integration of technologies and STEAM experiences, and social and emotional learning experiences for all students.

Each grade level wing branches out from the central core of the building and is supported by a large group instruction area to support collaborative activities for single or multiple classroom instruction.

A small group instruction shared between two classrooms is separated by sliding doors that can be opened or closed to allow for overflow space from the classroom or to provide individualized instruction. In lieu of students having to leave their classroom for support, the teachers push-in to their classroom thereby alleviating the stigmatism of getting sent out of the room.

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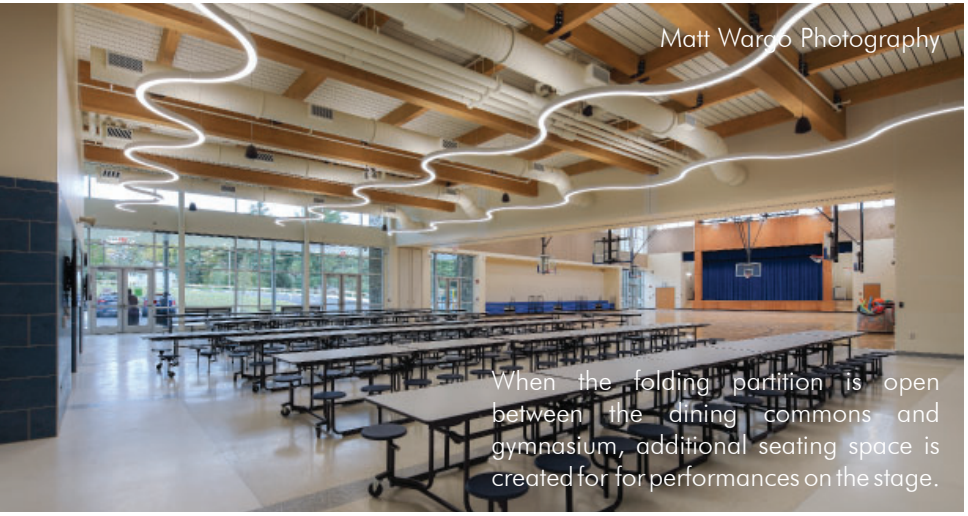
The small group instruction room offers the opportunity for individualized instruction without the student having to leave their classroom.



Matt Wargo Photography

When the folding partition is open between the dining commons and gymnasium, additional seating space is created for for performances on the stage.

ADAPTABLE + FLEXIBLE SPACES | The community spaces are located adjacent to the main entrance of the school separated from the academic zone of the building. The gymnasium with stage is a multi-functional space for physical education and performances. This space, used after hours by the community, is accessible to public toilet rooms, and can be secured from the rest of the school.

The dining commons adjacent to the gymnasium serves students over three lunch periods per day and is used for instruction for project-based learning activities. To accommodate larger performances and a variety of events, both school and public related, the location in the building near the main entrance and the adjacency to the kitchen and gymnasium provides a building amenity that is used well beyond a couple of hours a day. The function of the space also serves as one of the anchors to support the school's STEAM curriculum.

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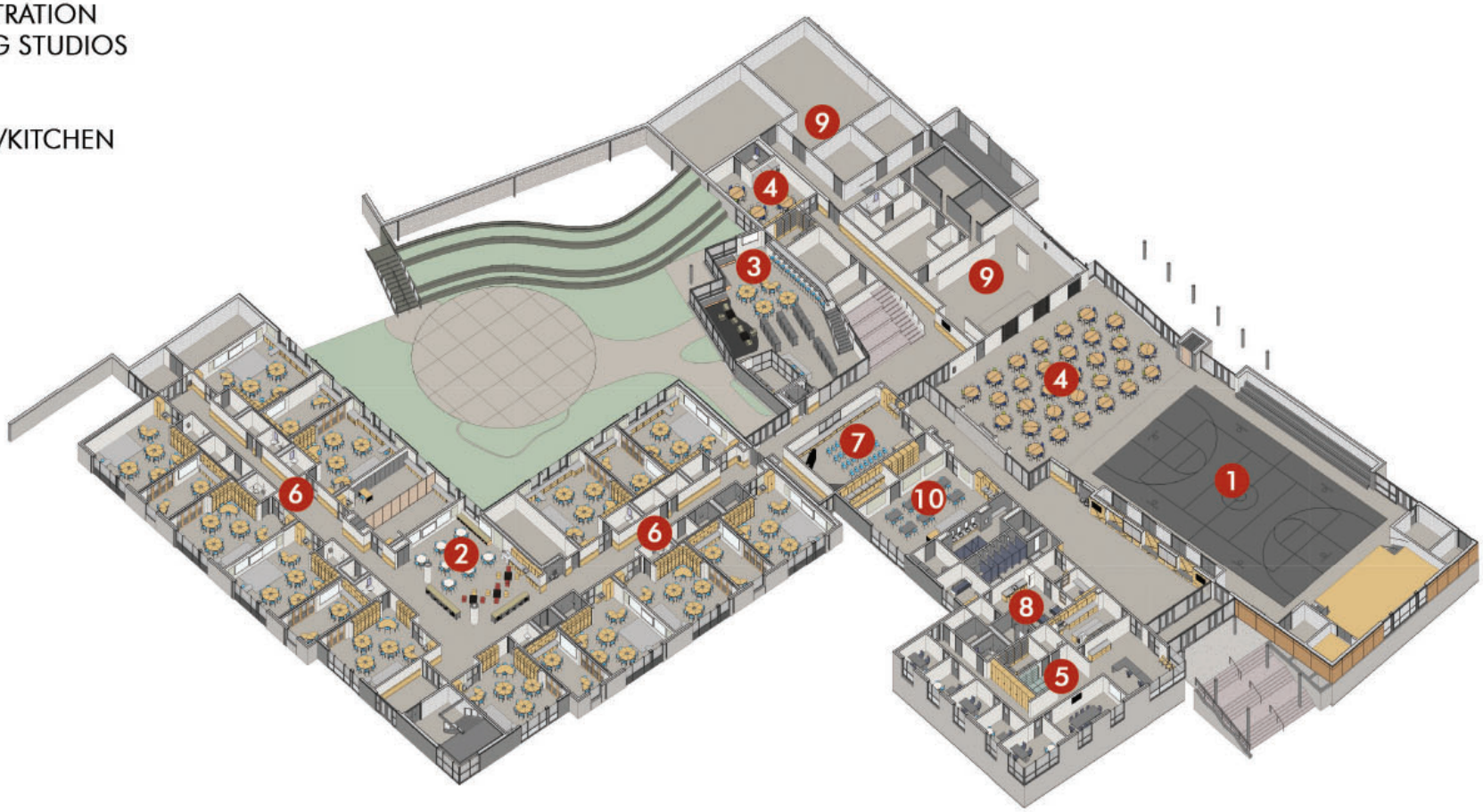
The large group instruction room central to each grade level learning cluster offers larger spaces for hands-on-learning and multi-disciplinary instruction.

Matt Wargo Photography

The Media Resource Center offers students the opportunity to research and read independently or meet in a classroom setting. The upstairs STEAM classroom is accessible from the Media Resource Center and serves as a maker space for hands-on learning.

GROUND LEVEL FLOOR PLAN

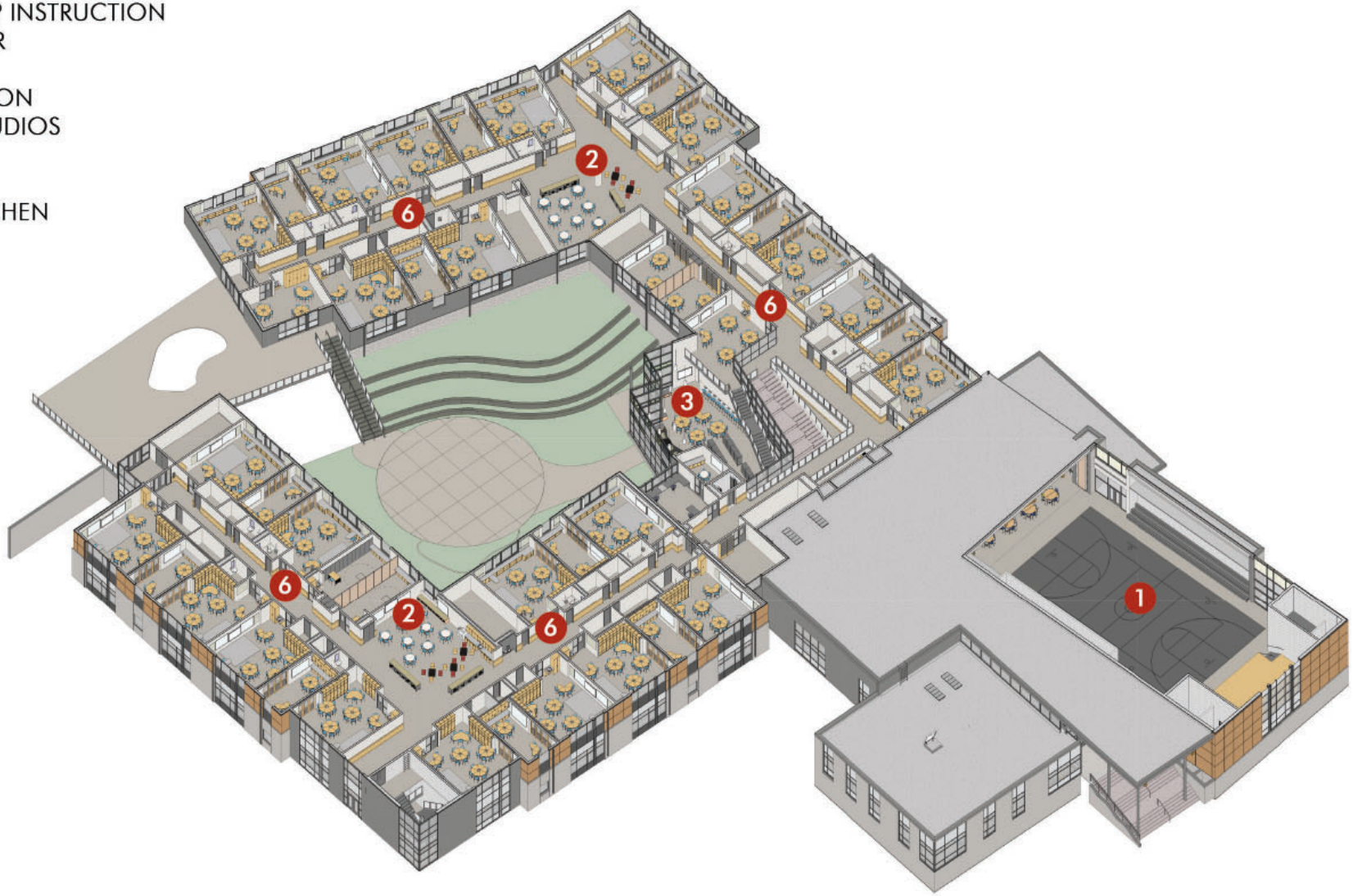
1 GYMNASIUM
2 LARGE GROUP INSTRUCTION
3 MEDIA CENTER
4 DINING
5 ADMINISTRATION
6 LEARNING STUDIOS
7 MUSIC
8 NURSE
9 SUPPORT/KITCHEN
10 ART



The building organization separates the public zones along the main street from the entrance at the administration area to the STEAM core of the building. The classroom wings (Kindergarten on this level) are a series of smaller learning communities supported by a small group instruction area between two classrooms and a large group instruction room central to each grade-level cluster.

SECOND LEVEL FLOOR PLAN

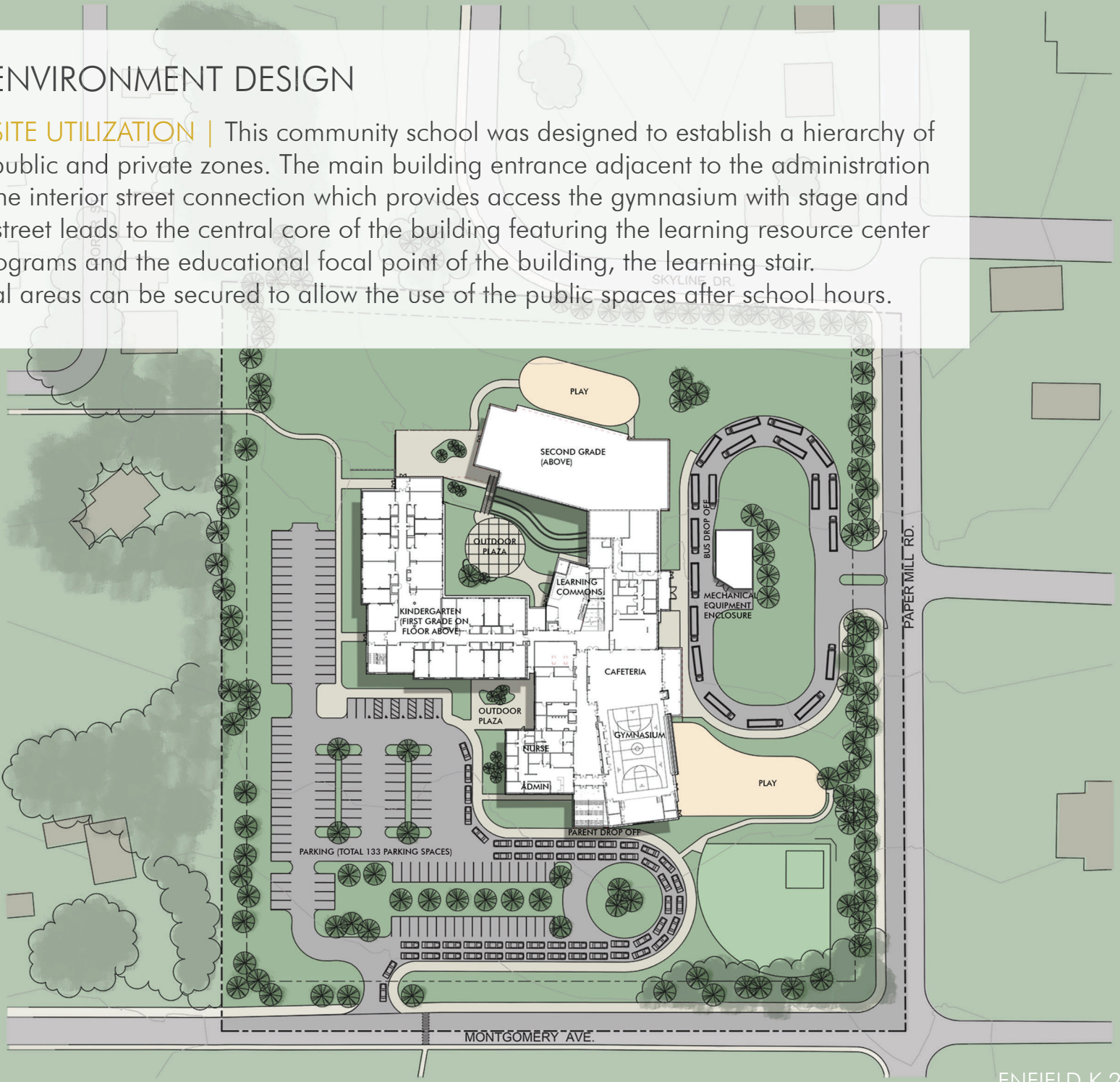
1 GYMNASIUM
2 LARGE GROUP INSTRUCTION
3 MEDIA CENTER
4 DINING
5 ADMINISTRATION
6 LEARNING STUDIOS
7 MUSIC
8 NURSE
9 SUPPORT/KITCHEN
10 ART



Similar to the first floor, the classroom wings (grades 1-2 on this floor level) are similarly grouped with small and large group instruction rooms integral to the instructional layout. This 3-D view helps visualize the public zones of the high volume spaces and the vertical connection of the STEAM core to both academic levels of the building.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT DESIGN

MAXIMIZING SITE UTILIZATION | This community school was designed to establish a hierarchy of the building's public and private zones. The main building entrance adjacent to the administration area anchors the interior street connection which provides access the gymnasium with stage and cafeteria. The street leads to the central core of the building featuring the learning resource center and STEAM programs and the educational focal point of the building, the learning stair.
The educational areas can be secured to allow the use of the public spaces after school hours.



Matt Wargo Photography

To reduce the mass of the building, the larger volume spaces were located at the lower elevation of the site, and the building gradually tiered into the sloping terrain.

PHYSICAL CONTEXT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY |

The ELC is built as a series of smaller masses with the large volume spaces at the lower level adjacent to the 2-story classroom wing, and a 1-story classroom wing at the upper level, to reduce the overall scale of the building. To fit within the context of the surrounding neighborhood, the exterior materials used compliments the vernacular architecture including an adjacent stone barn and residential homes in the area.

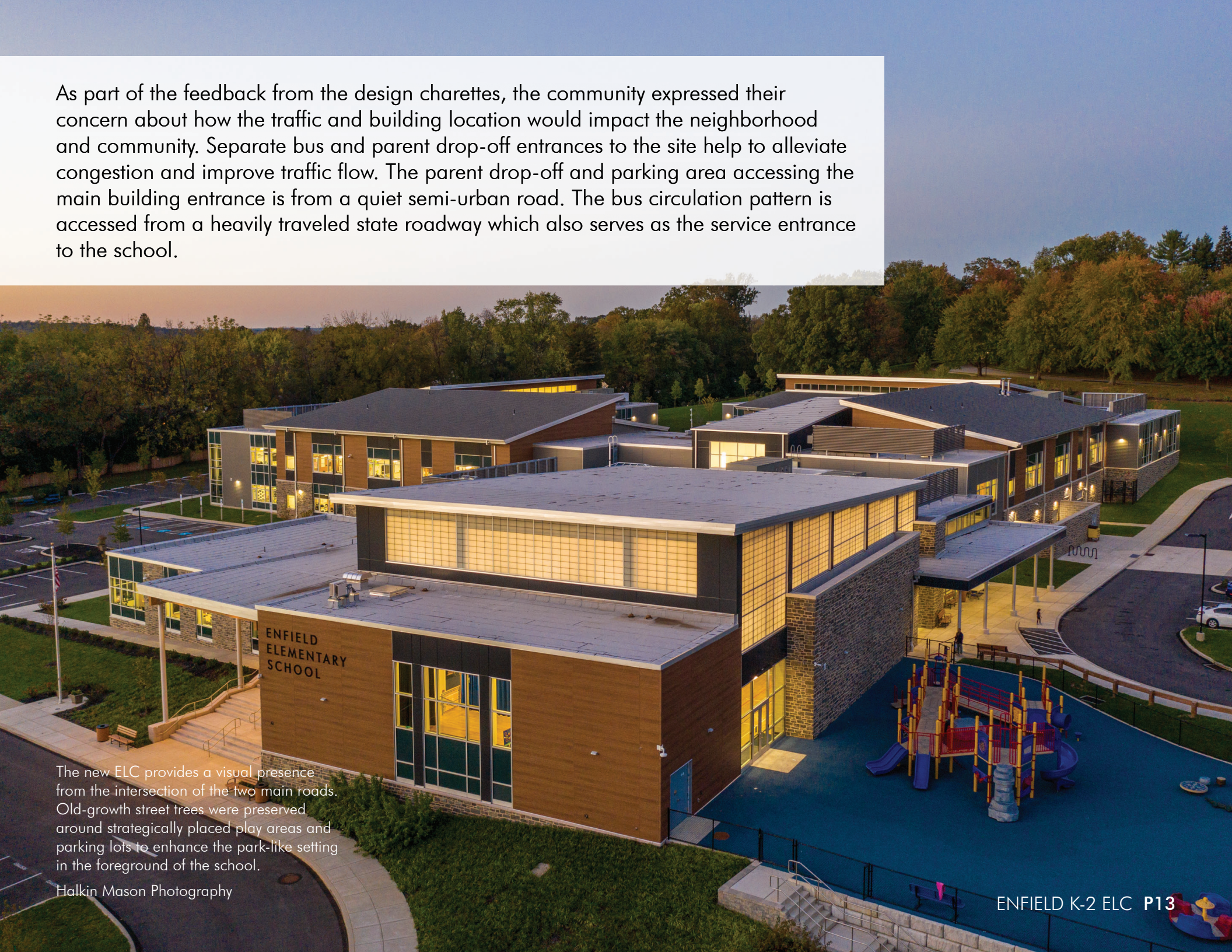
INSPIRATIONAL |

As noted by the Principal, the new ELC has been the light of the community, and especially in the wake of the pandemic, is something they have looked forward to.

Matt Wargo Photography

Exterior materials and colors such as the cementitious horizontal siding and stone, and the sloped rooflines with asphalt shingles, are residential in character to work within the surrounding context of the adjacent neighborhood.

As part of the feedback from the design charettes, the community expressed their concern about how the traffic and building location would impact the neighborhood and community. Separate bus and parent drop-off entrances to the site help to alleviate congestion and improve traffic flow. The parent drop-off and parking area accessing the main building entrance is from a quiet semi-urban road. The bus circulation pattern is accessed from a heavily traveled state roadway which also serves as the service entrance to the school.



The new ELC provides a visual presence from the intersection of the two main roads. Old-growth street trees were preserved around strategically placed play areas and parking lots to enhance the park-like setting in the foreground of the school.

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The Learning Stair acts as an additional space for large instruction or individual student learning space with access to the media center on the first floor and the STEAM learning space on the second floor.

RESULTS OF THE PROCESS + PROJECT

ACHIEVEMENTS + GOALS | Visioning, planning, and concept design workshops were integral to the design of this project. Multiple design charettes were held with community stakeholders including parents, teachers, Township representatives, neighbors, and students. These charettes laid the foundation for organizing the academic and public zones.

Educationally, the new ELC supports the district's goals of introducing project-based learning around the STEAM curriculum at the primary level.

It also addressed the overcrowding at the intermediate elementary school, and provides athletic space at the former primary school site for the middle school--all as a result of building the new ELC.

And as the pride of the community, designed for the community by the community, the new ELC provides flexible and multi-functional spaces that will serve the community for decades to come.

Creative lighting, glue-laminated beams and natural stone enhance the aesthetics of the space with colors, shapes and textures. Perforated acoustical ceiling panels help to mitigate the sound reverberation.

Halkin Mason Photography

SUSTAINABILITY + WELLNESS

The ELC design was completed using a community-based input process that included benchmarking the facility using LEED worksheets. While the facility did not ultimately pursue LEED certification, it was designed with sustainability in mind. The actual design considers sustainable techniques including, but not limited to, copious daylighting and views. Energy efficient HVAC and lighting systems, and environmental and sustainable site planning measures were included to reduce the impact to the existing site and to the surrounding neighborhoods.

New stormwater management systems designed for this project help address the water quality and quantity of run-off from the site. These systems contribute to the improvement of the surrounding water course.

The combination of landscaping and stormwater treatment systems also helps with reducing the thermal impacts of the stormwater. These provisions of stormwater management improvements and landscaping provide for improved habitat for local fauna.

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