Lee’s Summit High School
Lee’s Summit, Missouri

Multistudio

A4LE Project Awards - Transformation

May 13, 2026

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Transforming Lee’s Summit High School into a future-ready campus that supports student well-being and evolving educational needs.

Executive Summary

Lee's Summit High School was transformed through a major renovation and addition into a more connected, flexible, and future-ready campus.

A new circulatory route, acting as a spine, unifies previously disconnected areas, introducing innovation hubs and linking interior and exterior circulation through the "Innovation Way" and "Greenway." As part of LSR7's broader investment in equitable, safe, and future-ready learning environments, the school serves as a flagship for the district.

The project delivers enhanced learning spaces, increased daylight, clearer circulation, and a stronger campus identity—while expanding opportunities for collaboration and real-world learning. It also establishes a benchmark for future renovations and advances the district's bond-funded facilities strategy.



Photography by Michael Robinson and Leonid Furmansky



Lee’s Summit High School

Tasked with a vision to “think big and lead the charge,” this project reimagines a disjointed high school campus into a future-ready environment focused on real-world learning.

A central design move was the creation of a clearly defined spine—a combination of Innovation Way and The Greenway—that organizes the large site through interior and exterior circulation.

Innovation Way connects formerly disconnected buildings with a new route lined by flexible educational spaces, while The Greenway weaves outdoor learning into the daily student experience. Together, they support collaboration, security, and movement.

A series of Innovation Hubs are placed along this spine, offering adaptable, work-like settings where students engage in hands-on, project-based learning. As part of the Kauffman Foundation’s Real World Learning initiative, students use these spaces to gain market value assets and explore career pathways.

The design supports a culture of mentorship, industry connection, and readiness for life beyond graduation.

- → District Name: Lee’s Summit R-7 School District
- → Occupancy Date: Start of the 2024 school year
- → Student Capacity: 2,000 students
- → Site Size in Acres: 42 Acres
- → Building SF: 390,000 SF
- → Total Cost: $70 million

Community Context

Lee's Summit High School is the district's oldest high school and a highly visible landmark near major highways and the downtown core.

The surrounding community includes students, parents, district staff, business and civic leaders, and residents who saw the school not just as an educational facility but as a long-term community asset. The district's master planning process sought input from district committees, building-level groups, parents, staff, and community stakeholders.

The main challenges included aging infrastructure, uneven access to modern learning environments, safety and security needs, ADA accessibility, and the need to match facilities to current instructional expectations.



School and Community Research & Engagement

Engagement Process

From the outset, LSR7's visioning process was structured and participatory. The district convened a steering committee and building-based working groups, supported by surveys with thousands of responses, stakeholder calls, and facility tours to ground decisions in real conditions. At the building scale, participants used targeted exercises to prioritize needs.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles were embedded throughout, using a co-developed "Deck of Spaces" to align pedagogy with engagement (why), representation (what), and action and expression (how). This approach built early buy-in and shared ownership while balancing systemwide equity with building-specific priorities.

Engagement brought the community together and informed priorities such as ADA access, safety, and equitable learning environments. The Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan reinforced this alignment by ensuring consistent access to high-quality learning conditions across all schools.

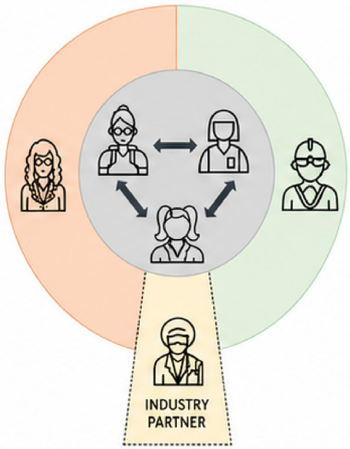




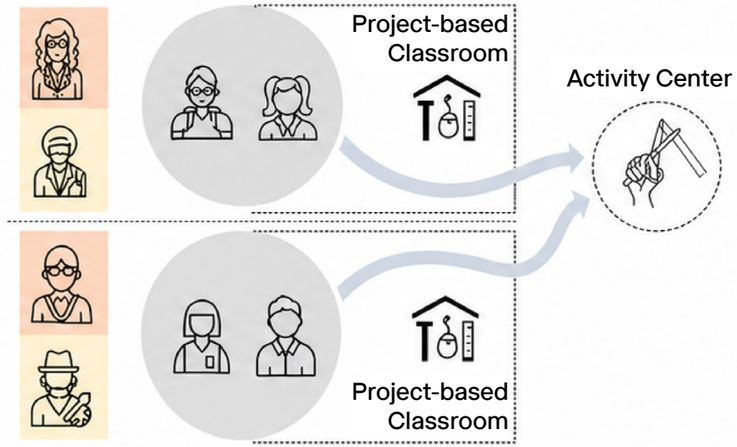


Education Rooted in Real-World Learning

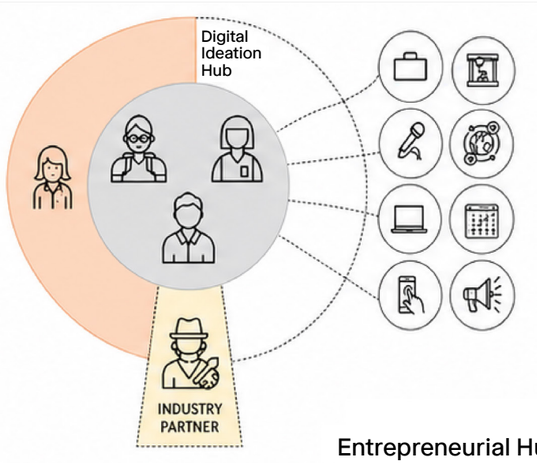
1. Cross-departmental Hub



2. Project-based Learning Hub

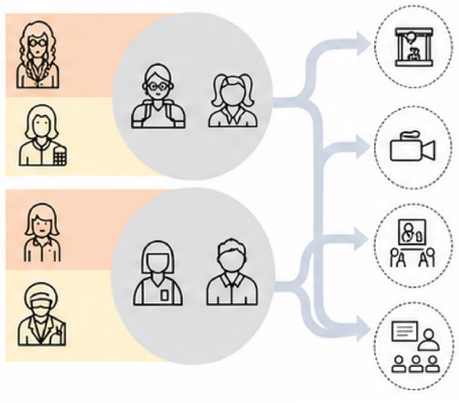


3. Entrepreneurial Pathway



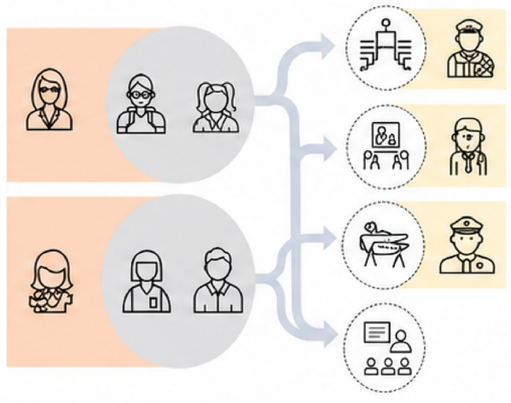
Entrepreneurial Hubs

4. Rotating Class Model



Shared
Learning Labs

5. Department Hosted Hubs



Industry
Learning Labs

1) The Innovation Hub brings teachers together to co-lead interdisciplinary, real-world projects with industry partners. A centrally located hub connects directly to the library and shared activity center, creating a visible, collaborative learning core.

2) Project-based classrooms are designed for making and strategically clustered to enable cross-disciplinary work. Each connects to specialized activity centers that expand hands-on learning and simulate real workplace environments.

3) Organized around the phases of design thinking, the Innovation Hub replaces traditional subject silos with a fluid, process-driven model. Students move seamlessly between studios, tools, and expert-led instruction in an iterative learning environment.

4) Teachers flexibly choose between open and enclosed settings to match instructional needs. Classrooms are paired with workplace-inspired activity centers, supporting applied learning across a range of contexts.

5) The Innovation Hub operates on a rotating model of industry-focused environments, including public safety, industrial arts, international studies, business, and engineering, forming an ecosystem supported by partners like Garmin, Cerner, and Sprint.

Reconnecting a Fragmented Campus

Lee's Summit High School is centered around a central corridor that reorganizes movement and interaction, with the Innovation Way and the Greenway linking interior and exterior learning areas. Responding to the school's visible site and its role as a landmark, the team improved circulation that happens between classes and campus cohesion. The result is a campus that feels more connected and inviting for students and visitors.



Existing Building

Addition

N

Spatial Drivers

Innovation became a new ‘thread’ to reconnect a long history of spatial interventions and additions that had been added onto Lee’s Summit High School since the 1950s. It was important to create a logical and flexible environment that connects general classrooms to future-ready spaces that expand the role of traditional teaching and learning to include new methodologies and pedagogies aligned with the district’s portrait of a 21st-century graduate.





The project advances DEI by expanding access and enabling multiple uses of interstitial space. It supports sustainability and wellness through daylighting, outdoor learning corridors, and the Greenway's connection to nature, while promoting student motivation by making learning visible, collaborative, and reflective of professional environments.

As innovation hubs introduced new models for interdisciplinary, project-based, and community-connected learning, engagement operated as a testing mechanism. Day-in-the-life scenarios and simulation exercises evaluated how these pedagogies perform within real spatial constraints.





A Connected Campus

A new internal spine organizes movement through the school, making navigation clearer while turning everyday paths into part of the campus experience.

Wood wall panels and acoustic baffles run along key corridors, helping define the main spine and “node” areas so students can visually track where they are and where they are headed. These wood elements are often paired with tackable, gallery-style surfaces that highlight student work and program identities, reinforcing each zone’s purpose and making it easier to remember routes between, say, a science lab and a collaboration hub.



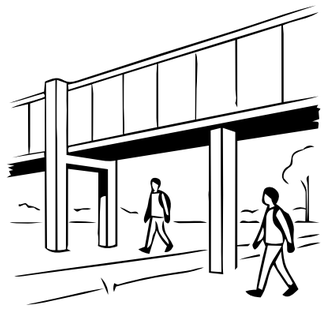




Where Students Gather

The school’s main hallway provides collaboration spaces and innovation hubs that create places where students, teachers, and partners can meet, work, and share ideas.





The Greenway

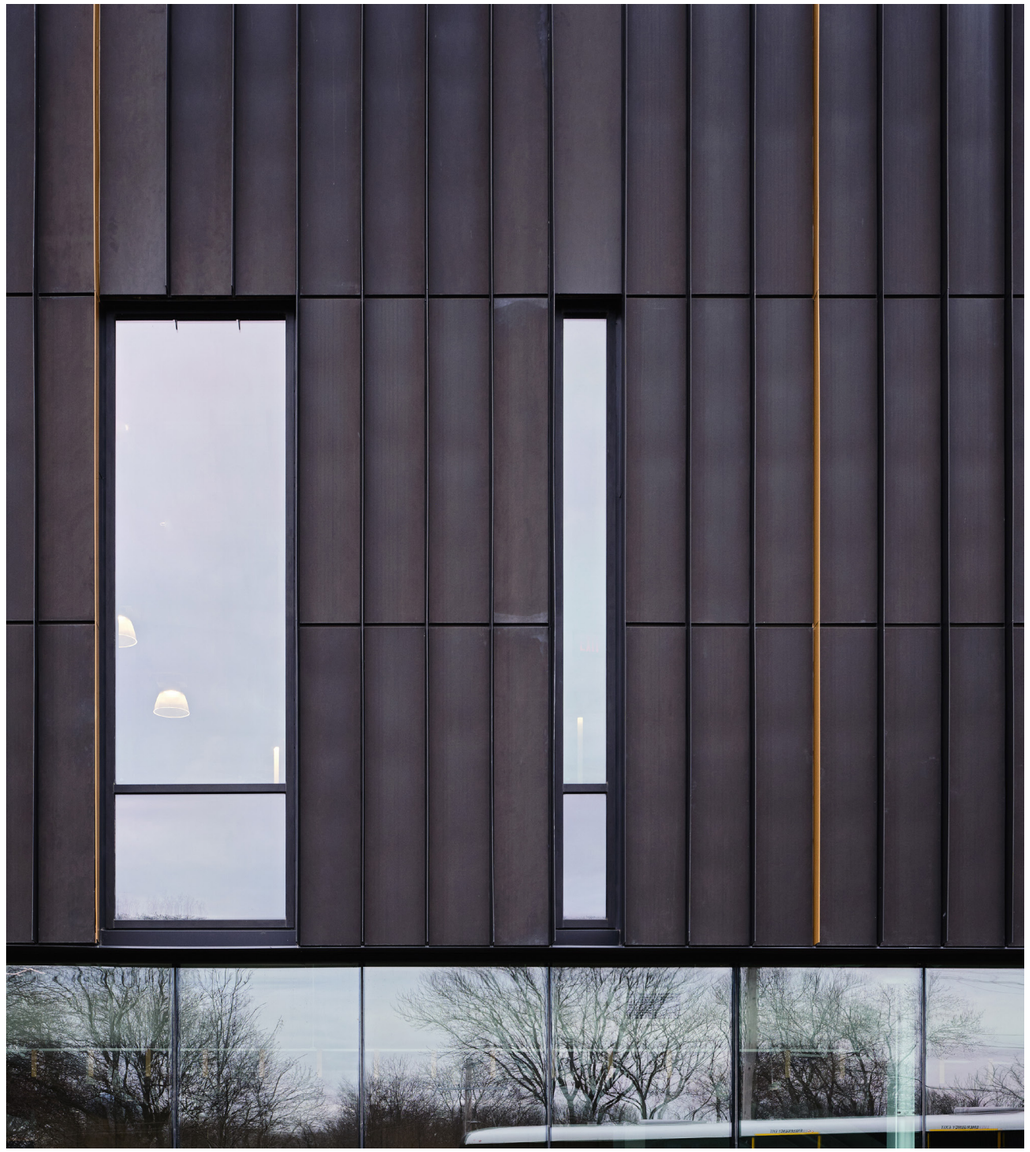
The Greenway adds a secure outdoor corridor that connects learning spaces with nature and gives students a place to move, meet, and spend time outside.



Materiality & Wayfinding

A pre-patinated zinc metal cladding gives the addition a contemporary presence that contrasts with the building's brick base. The panels consist of neutral-toned bands around glass volumes along the circulation spine, helping to visually lift the façade and emphasize the Innovation Way and Greenway as transparent, daylight-rich paths.







Signage and wayfinding at Lee's Summit High School is integrated within existing millwork, complementing the school's identity while remaining clear, impactful, and functional.

The implemented graphics and signage package included the Hall of Fame display, in which existing bronze plaques were replaced with fresh acrylic panels featuring sketch-style illustrations, and a limited set of interior directional signs. This shift to acrylic enabled the school to update honorees over time and added vibrancy to the space through yellow brand accents.

Vision & Goals

The team emphasized real-world learning aligned to the district's Portrait of a Graduate and Learning Spaces framework.

The district's 2021–2024 strategic plan introduced its "Portrait of a Graduate"—a community-driven framework defining the skills, character traits, and competencies students should carry beyond high school. This framework served as a north star for the design team, shaping early charrettes and grounding decision-making in shared outcomes.

Innovation Hubs along the campus spine support project-based learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and industry partnerships, mirroring professional workspaces. These spaces were also positioned to support the Kauffman Foundation's Real World Learning initiative and Market Value Assets.



Supporting Every Learner



The environment supports diverse learning and teaching styles by providing flexible, collaborative, and outdoor spaces rather than relying on a single classroom model.

It is adaptable because the hubs and circulation spine can support many instructional modes, from group work to informal mentoring to hands-on learning. The project's educational innovation lies in linking space design directly to learning outcomes, not just facility updates.

Additionally, innovation environments intentionally brought school resources to the classroom – integrating new models for leveraging media, break-out space, maker labs, public forum, and spaces for community partnership – transitioning traditional instructional spaces into learning labs that encourage exploration, research, and discovery.

Data-Driven Outcomes

In fall 2023, the team partnered with LSHS to capture hour-by-hour teaching location data, mapping how educators intended to use space throughout the day.

That dataset was paired with a targeted focus group of the English department—one of the school's most spatially agile teams—to understand the decision-making behind those choices. Ongoing collaboration with administration translated findings into action through four professional development sessions and a space usage guide aligning spatial affordances with pedagogy.

Wellness outcomes extend beyond metrics. Teachers report that the collaborative spatial model strengthens interdepartmental connection, supporting retention, reducing stress, and reinforcing the social fabric critical to a healthy school culture.

30 minutes saved per lesson for prep-intensive formats like Socratic seminars and project-based learning

Up to 50% utilization of activity centers during bookable hours each month

56% reduction in energy use intensity, achieving a net pEUI of 37