BEVERIDGE MAGNET MIDDLE SCHOOL
ADDITION & RENOVATION
Omaha, Nebraska
Prior to this project, Beveridge Magnet Middle School had been virtually untouched since its construction in 1964. The existing building faced a multitude of challenges, such as overcrowding due to introducing 6th grade despite the school being originally designed to house 7th and 8th grades, a poorly designed entrance and ineffective, congested traffic flow. As a magnet school, Beveridge champions the arts and global studies, and students choose a “major” that guides their studies, including music, art, theater, and more.

The designers worked closely with Beveridge students as an integrated design team to create a design to suit the specific needs of each individual, including three separate engagement meetings on-site and at the firm’s office. This allowed students to not only provide their valuable input, but also to learn about the design process itself during the collaboration. At the initial meeting, the integrated design team brainstormed different ideas. They discussed potential spaces for students to hold performances outdoors, display their work, as well as the inclusion of a courtyard and potential sculpture garden. These student engagement activities led to a plan that transformed the outdated and uninspiring school design into a facility that celebrates the magnet school’s focus on global studies and performing arts, while inspiring students and teachers.

The yellow-wrapped entry design reflects a bridge to cultures all over the world and a stage that students and teachers enter to perform every day. The aperture of the bridge simulates a theater stage with the library as the backdrop. The elevated library connects the 7th and 8th grade learning communities to the new 6th grade addition, while also creating a passage to the courtyard. The addition includes new studio arts facilities and a flexible performing arts center that frames the courtyard, creating a point of intersection. The courtyard facilitates learning assemblies, social interaction, fitness, and a performance stage. Multiple points in the building are galleries of student art and expressions of our globe.
Original 1964 building (top) and its 2017 renovation and addition (bottom).
First Floor
1. Art
2. Multipurpose
3. Band
4. Vocal
5. Ensemble
6. Stage
7. Auditorium
8. Computer Lab
9. P.E. Classroom
10. Industrial Technology
11. Gymnasium
12. Girl’s Locker Room
13. Boy’s Locker Room
14. Receiving
15. Cafeteria
16. Kitchen
17. Mechanical / Electrical
18. 6th Grade
19. Resource
20. ESL
21. 6th Grade Science
22. Administration
23. Positive Action
24. ACP
25. Computer Lab
26. 7th Grade Science
27. 7th Grade
28. Work Room
SECOND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/64" = 1'-0"

Second Floor
1. 6th Grade
2. 6th Grade Science
3. Work Room
4. Computer Lab
5. Dual Language Science
6. FCS
7. Mechanical
8. ESL
9. 8th Grade Science
10. Business
11. Resource
12. 8th Grade
13. Library
The mission of Omaha Public Schools is to prepare students for life in a world where understanding and appreciation of diversity are essential. Beveridge Magnet Middle School is a champion of that mission and the updated facility is its apparatus. As a magnet school, it serves students specifically in global studies and the visual and performing arts. The values and standards of the school make it a haven where academic excellence is a tradition, talents are nurtured, and students can explore their role in the global community. These attributes were the guiding principles of the design process. The input of students was a key asset that designers utilized to identify the details of the design that would best suit their individual needs. Designers wanted each of the learning environments to be a tool for students to reach their full potential in their areas of study. Three primary challenges included adding 6th grade to the school, originally designed to house 7th and 8th grades, a poorly designed entrance and ineffective, congested traffic flow. These challenges were addressed with consideration of the guiding principles. The design transforms the outdated and uninspiring school design into a facility that celebrates the magnet school’s focus on global studies and performing arts, while inspiring students and teachers.
School & Community Engagement

The process of engaging stakeholders was in and of itself a valuable opportunity for students to learn about the complex and all-encompassing effort necessary to create a design that serves everyone. Several visioning sessions were held with students and staff in order to be able to understand and listen to concerns or opportunities for improvement. The principal worked alongside the design team to truly engage students and get them excited about the project and its legacy on future generations and the surrounding community.

Engaging students and stakeholders in the design process serves as a positive example of the value of diversity to the community at large. The comprehensive effort directly resulted in the success of the project.
Beveridge Magnet Middle School offers traditional courses of math, science, social studies, and language arts, but beyond that, there is an emphasis on global studies and the performing arts. Art, drama, vocal music, band, orchestra, international studies, and the dual language magnet program complement the curriculum and encourage students to explore their unique gifts. The school envisioned that the updated facility would reflect the emphasis on fine art and international studies. The new educational environment serves as a tool for students to leverage as they discover themselves and explore their goals. Flexible performance spaces including an outdoor stage in the new courtyard and specialized areas to display student work were incorporated into the design.

The school itself is made up of an extremely diverse group of students, and the use of color and national flags throughout the facility was an inspiration for selecting the bold color of the exterior addition of the building. The school’s passion for performing arts also influenced the design of the main entrance. Its concept puts students “on stage” when they enter the building, where they come to “perform” their daily activities. Whether those performances take place in the auditorium or the math classroom, the facility offers encouragement to students to put their efforts and capabilities on display.
The aperture of the bridge simulates a theater stage with the library as the backdrop and showcases the entrance to the courtyard.
Physical Environment

The diverse physical environment reflects the diversity of the student body and the surrounding community. The scope of work for this project includes a 128,000 SF renovation as well as a 28,000 SF addition. The renovation included the removal of seven modular structures, a complete reconfiguration of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and a complete redesign of the entrance and existing infra-structure. The addition consisted of new learning areas for 6th graders as well as a new athletic track. Multi-functional spaces were developed that are easily adaptable for rehearsals, projects, and research that serve students, teachers, and the community. In addition, many sustainability measures were implemented into the school, including daylighting, time scheduling and occupancy sensors. The addition renovations made the overall building safer with the inclusion of the above-ground storm shelter and secure main entrance.

The existing building did not have a very identifiable entrance that the school used as their main door, which formerly led directly past the receiving area and the garbage dumpsters. The design team resolved this by establishing a prominent and bold main entrance that attracts visitors and instills a sense of energy and pride for students and staff. The design of the main entrance was considered from all available areas, which resulted in its relocation to the near opposite side of the building from its former location. This allowed the opportunity to completely update the approach of the building and the security procedures at the main entrance and beyond.
Plaza (before), New Courtyard (after)
Part of the Addition includes a ‘Black Box’ Performing Arts Space
Library bridge and multi-purpose learning space
Results of the Process & Project

The addition and renovations of Beveridge Magnet Middle School achieve the school district’s goals of creating a world where students understand and appreciate diversity. Each space offers unique opportunities for students to maximize their capabilities and explore their talents. The design team utilized the input of its diverse set of learners through student engagement visioning sessions to create a diverse and adaptable environment. The improved facilities provide an arts hub not only for students, but for the community at large.