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Shakopee High School’s student population growth reached a critical mass in 2015. With growth on track to become one of the largest high schools in the state of Minnesota, Shakopee needed to effectively double their facility space to accommodate current and future students. Shakopee was one of the only remaining Minnesota districts with a four building progression – a K-5 elementary, 6th-grade transition center, 7-9 junior high and a 10-12 high school – and the community voiced a desire to move to a 9-12 grade structure focused on career-readiness and engaging all students on an individual level. Through the planning and design process, a plan took shape to address both the capacity and authentic learning environment questions. The main goals included:

- Create a unified high school facility capable of handling the growing student population
- Implement an authentic learning experience through the academy model to effectively prepare all students for life after high school
- Serve every graduate of Shakopee High School on an individual level
- Maintain a cohesive district identity as the Shakopee Sabers
- Earn a place within the network of Ford Next Generation Learning Communities
## SCOPE OF WORK & BUDGET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specification</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grades</td>
<td>9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Square Feet</td>
<td>644,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addition/Renovation Square Feet</td>
<td>502,424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Million in Total Cost</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Square Feet / Student</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The academic program actually drove the design of the building. Wold was instrumental in helping us create learning spaces that matched the vision of the Academy Learning Model.

Jeff Pawlicki  
Shakopee High School Principal
1. existing building
2. main entry
3. building addition
4. bus parking*
5. parking*
6. storm pond
7. storm pond expansion

* total parking: 1,458 +/-
In the last three decades, Shakopee, MN has grown from an agricultural community to a true suburb of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Though the population has grown and diversified, the community still holds roots in the unified, hometown feel of decades past. This perspective guided the process for updating the district’s schools.

An initial referendum effort in 2014 proposed dividing the district’s high school students into two new facilities. When this referendum failed, the district heard repeatedly that the community wanted one high school, no matter the student body size. The community is driven by a belief in unity, identity and shared success, which called for one high school as opposed to splitting the district’s students.
STAKEHOLDERS

Students
Teachers & Staff
Administrators
District Leadership
Parents
Community Business Partners
School Board
Community Members / Taxpayers
CHALLENGES

The challenge was to create authentic, legitimate and adaptive learning environments for every student in the 3,200 population. Each academy houses approximately 400 students, creating smaller, tailored learning opportunities. One challenge was deciding which elements of the school’s functionality could dispense into Academies and which couldn’t, for example physical education & lunch.

The physical challenge was how to remake an existing, traditional academic departmental facility to match this new, decentralized and individualized academy model. We accomplished this by adding on to all sides of the facility and remodeling the existing space to reconfigure the school to the newly organized building.
The existing high school facility served as a core for designers to build around from each side to best accommodate the changing learning environments. This existing framework opened up the possibilities for designers to engage with the structure and implement changes on an individualized level rather than creating an entirely new structure. In addition to the physical assets, the Shakopee community took to the project and came together to create a school to fit the needs of the entire district. The community engagement is evidenced throughout the space, particularly through the business partnerships or Academy Champions with local companies. Academy Champions include:

- **Health Sciences** – St. Francis Regional Medical Center
- **Human Services** – City of Shakopee and Scott County
- **Science & Technology** – Entrust Datacard
- **Arts & Communication** – Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
- **Business & Entrepreneurship** – HomeTown Bank
- **Engineering & Manufacturing** – Shutterfly
- **Freshman Academy** – Apple Autos

**AVAILABLE ASSETS**

The existing high school facility served as a core for designers to build around from each side to best accommodate the changing learning environments. This existing framework opened up the possibilities for designers to engage with the structure and implement changes on an individualized level rather than creating an entirely new structure. In addition to the physical assets, the Shakopee community took to the project and came together to create a school to fit the needs of the entire district. The community engagement is evidenced throughout the space, particularly through the business partnerships or Academy Champions with local companies. Academy Champions include:

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- **Freshman Academy** – Apple Autos
The newly redesigned Shakopee High School serves as a forward-thinking, innovative and nationally-recognized learning environment for next generation learners. Wold’s design process incorporates input from all stakeholders to ensure the end product is beneficial to everyone who may engage with the space. Students, teachers, administrators, parents and others provided input for the design and can now walk through the school and see how that input shaped the final product. By gaining community buy-in during the design process, Wold helps to build facilities which not only meet the needs of those using the building but truly reflect the mission and values of the entire community.
To establish individual learning environments within a large student body, Shakopee turned to the Academy Learning Model for curricular and facility redesign. The district and design team implemented this model in the physical environment and learning styles of the school. The academy model combines electives and core graduation requirements under one of six broader themes, directly tying student learning to hands-on, authentic career experiences.

The Academy Learning Model necessitated distinctions between each learning environment while still maintaining a cohesive, unified community within the high school. Each academy has a distinct location, visual identity and branding featuring student-designed logos and color palettes. The academy locations were predicated on the existing facility and interconnectedness of the various programs. The existing science department atop the shop floor below created the starting point for the sister academies of Science & Technology and Engineering & Manufacturing.

Knowing that a large portion of the Arts & Communications Academy is performance-based, it stands in close proximity to the existing performance space. Each academy is connected by a series of flexible learning spaces and student commons. Academy Signature Spaces including the culinary arts lab, bank and health science simulation lab foster authentic work experiences and promote career pursuits within the academy.
The Academy Learning Model connects electives and core class requirements under one of the six broader themes, which means a student’s learning experiences will more directly tie to actual career experiences. Traditional learning programs often fail to connect the classroom to the career-path, a concern directly addressed in Shakopee’s design. Utilizing the academy approach allows the district to achieve its two objectives of improving student success transitioning to a career and creating an individualized learning environment.

The self-selected academy serves as the learning “home” for the rest of the high school experience. By design, traditional core requirements such as English, Science and Math will all be taught within the academy’s focus and relate to the academy purpose. For example, a student in the Business & Entrepreneurship Academy might meet their English requirement through writing a business plan.
Designers leveraged existing spaces while adding to all sides of the building. Academies are dispersed in towers, yet connected by a central commons. The commons traces from the main entry through the fine arts lobby, expanded student commons and activities entrance lobby. The academic towers support flexible learning opportunities with breakout areas near classrooms and unique furniture options.

Existing spaces created the starting point for new additions. The existing science department above the shop grounds the “sister academies” of Science & Technology and Engineering & Manufacturing. Knowing that a portion of the Arts & Communications Academy is performance-based, it’s in close proximity to the existing performance space.

To improve wayfinding and promote an identity, each Academy has its own color palette, logo, Academy Champion and Signature Space including a functional bank, culinary arts lab, robotics lab and hospital simulation lab. Signature spaces promote the individuality of each academy while giving students a group identity.
Shakopee High School recently finished its first full school year in the completed facility. Students in grades 9-12 now have a unique, individualized, authentic learning environment equipped to help each of them prepare for their future endeavors. Upon entering the school, students, parents and guests see the list of academies and know they’re in a next generation learning space.

Shakopee’s recent acceptance into the Ford Next Generation Learning network allows this project to be a national example focused on remaking the high school experience. This model bridges the gap between academic learning and career-readiness by bringing industry into the classroom in an effort to reach all students and better equip them for life after high school. The Shakopee Saber community has an adaptive, innovative learning space tailored to their community needs and capable of serving all their students for decades to come.
The planning process for Shakopee High School didn’t end when construction began. Throughout the building process, plans were revised and adapted to fit the needs of the district while accommodating occupancy and instruction which continued during the construction period. This process allowed designers and team members to take on a unique project style which required beyond the typical style of project management. Planning for the curriculum while also constructing additions and taking on renovations meant the scope and details of the project fluctuated beyond the typical timeline.

Shakopee selected the Academy Learning Model based on the needs of their students and a desire to implement curriculum that can adapt and grow along with the district. Throughout the beginning stages of implementation, the curriculum became engrained into the school beyond the expectations of the district and design team. Enrollment in each academy was within the desired distribution rate, students and teachers adapted to the updated curriculum and the school atmosphere shifted to match the innovative design of both the physical space and curricular design. This level of engagement with the curriculum and updated spaces was absolutely intended, but the rate at which the school adopted these changes was a pleasant surprise to those at the helm. This further demonstrates the accuracy of the planning process in relation to what the school needed and how students in Shakopee want to engage with their learning environment.