



Kathlyn Joy Gilliam Collegiate Academy

CEFPI MacConnell Award Submission



“It’s a magnificent institution of learning and I’m just real pleased that it’s up and running and we expect great things to come out of this school.”

*Kathlyn Joy Gilliam
Past board member*

I Scope of Work

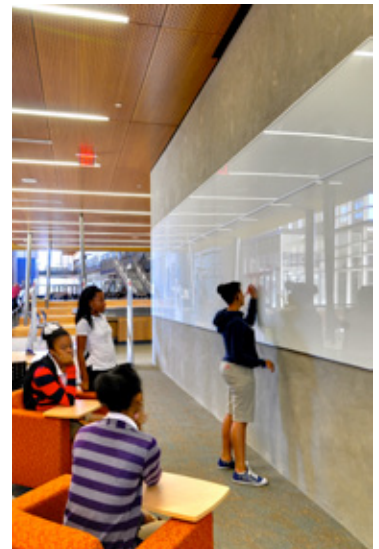


The project scope was to create the first custom designed early college high school in the State of Texas, a project initiated by a grant through Educate Texas on behalf of the Gates Foundation and the district's needs.

The school is designed to serve 500 students in grades 9 through 12 targeted for potential first generation college goers in an environment that replicated the college experience.

The project consists of two story academic spaces, administration, dining, food service, gymnasium, supporting athletic areas, library, and a tiered lecture hall with multipurpose stage. Related site development included the integration of intramural spaces to support basketball and soccer and the creation of a nature preserve.

The project included working with the key stakeholders from the district, community, and partnering colleges to develop a vision for the campus, creating a program of spaces that would support the vision, defining the architectural problem statements that would guide the design process, and then designing, documenting, and providing oversight during the construction processes.



I Budget

Dallas ISD, having never designed and constructed a new early college learning environment, began with a budget for construction of a new early college high school to serve 950 students that would take place in a traditional style high school setting. By convincing the district to step back and envision their future for their early college high school, the construction budget, the program of spaces, the number of students serves, and the amount of square feet per student were reconsidered. The budget was revised to reflect their new envisioned future.

Before Visioning Process

<i>Construction Budget:</i>	\$23,500,000
<i>Program of Spaces:</i>	125,000
<i>No. of Student Served:</i>	950
<i>Square Feet Per Student:</i>	132

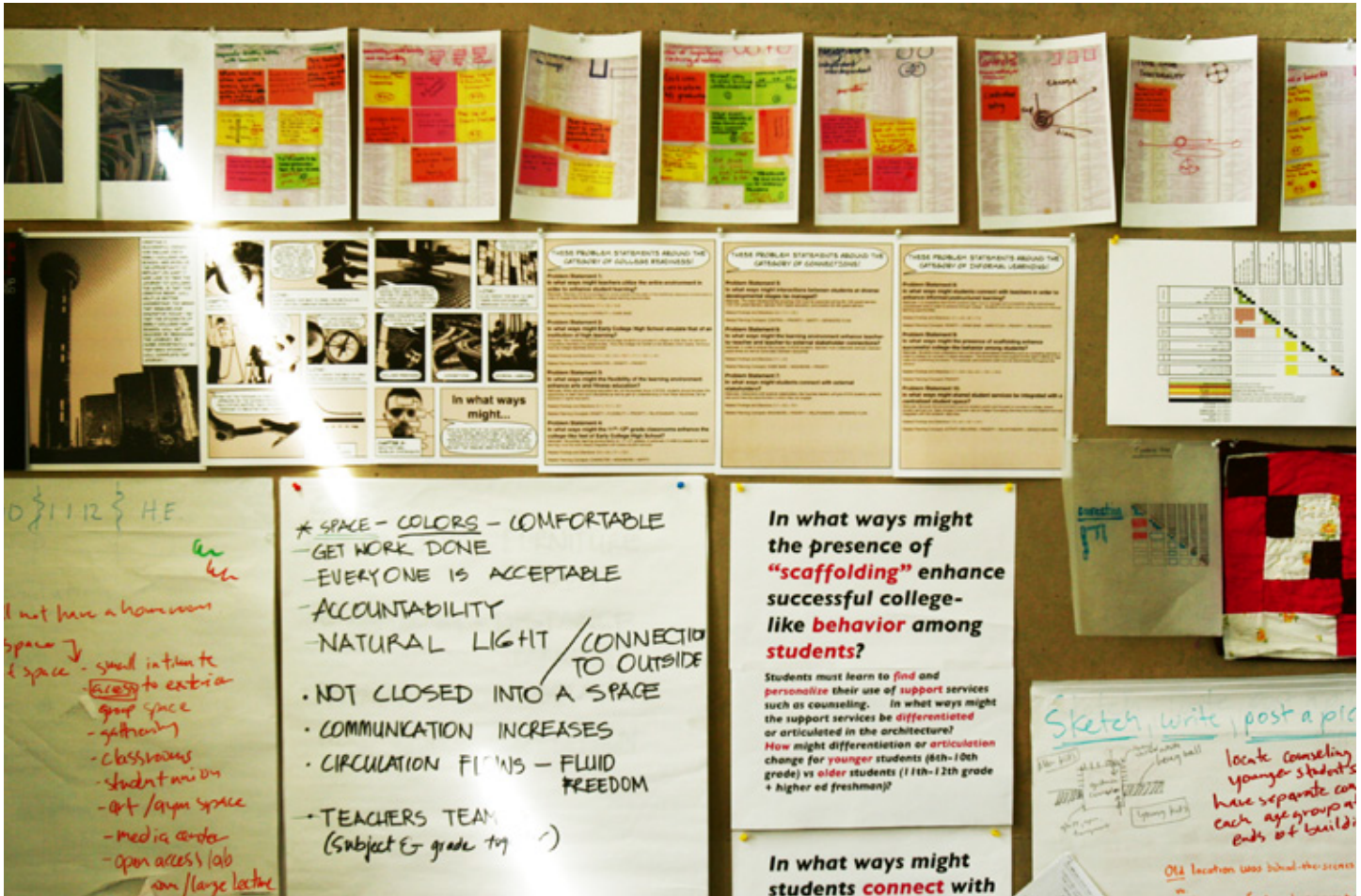
After Visioning Process

<i>Construction Budget:</i>	\$21,500,000
<i>Program of Spaces:</i>	106,000
<i>No. of Student Served:</i>	500
<i>Square Feet Per Student:</i>	212

The budget, beginning at \$23,500,000.00, concluded with a significant reduction resulting in a final project price of \$21,500,000. This project cost included all improvements related to site work, building construction, fixed furnishings, and technology infrastructure.



I Community Engagement Process



The Early College High School Community was created as part of a partnership between the Dallas Independent School District, Cedar Valley College, the University of North Texas Dallas Campus, and the Texas High School Projects of the Communities Foundation of Texas. The partnership is committed to creating educational opportunities for hardworking students. The Early College High with Cedar Valley College (ECHS) opened its doors to a freshman class of 100 students in August 2008 at Nolan Estes Plaza. The District has dedicated funds from the 2008 bond program to build a new facility. The District owns land adjoining the University of North Texas Dallas Campus for the ECHS facility.

Students must apply to the program and are selected based on predetermined criteria, such as socioeconomic background, behavior and family history of college attendance – not primarily on academic achievement. Thus, the design needed to meet the needs of this target student.

Furthermore, the school needed to support both the more structured style of learning typical in a high school as well as the more independent learning style traditional of collegiate environments.

The design professionals met with the district administration and persuaded them to step back and begin a process to reinvent their current programs and processes, and to envision what the ideal portrait of a graduate would look like.

The design team and their visioning facilitators worked with the District to assemble a Visioning Committee of stakeholders and partners in the ECHS to develop statements about what the District believes about learning at the ECHS and statements about how to accomplish those beliefs. These statements will drive the design of the learning environment in the new facility. The Visioning Committee was expected to

consider and utilize all documents that pertain to the Early College High School Initiative, the District mission, vision, beliefs and commitments. A main focus of the committee was the belief that it is our responsibility to prepare students to successfully complete post-secondary education in alignment with the District's Theory of Action.

Visioning Process

The Visioning Committee included fifty-two members representing all segments of the ECHS community. Students from the Cedar Valley and Mountain View ECHS campuses, teachers and staff, parents, community and business leaders, representatives from Cedar Valley College and the University of North Texas Dallas, a school board member, Dallas Police officer, legislative aide, DISD Facilities staff, and the design team architects made up the committee. The committee met four times for a total of fourteen hours to explore broad concepts of how instruction should be delivered at ECHS. A comprehensive list of topics and questions were discussed at each meeting, and the discussions were captured in the Findings and Directions document located in Appendix A.

The design team conducted an intensive visioning process, involving designers, programmers, administrators, teachers and students, to determine how the facility could best meet the needs of teachers, students, community members, area businesses, and partnering colleges.

Based on the information gathered in these sessions, the design team determined 10 problem statements that needed to be solved through thoughtful planning and design.

Architectural Problem Statements

Preface:

The overarching theme of these pre-design discussions has been about creating a student-centric learning environment that nurtures success throughout higher learning. Keep this in mind when reviewing each of the following architectural problem statements.

Problem Statement 1:

In what ways might teachers utilize the entire environment in order to enhance student learning?

Teachers will be encouraged to move outside of the walls of the traditional classroom environment in order to engage their students in college-ready learning opportunities.

Problem Statement 2:

In what ways might Early College High School emulate that of an institution of higher learning?

The character of ECHS must encourage students to succeed in college so that they can become competitive members of a global society. From the College Go Center to the Student Union Space, the focus must be college-readiness and success.

Problem Statement 3:

In what ways might the flexibility of the learning environment enhance arts and fitness education?

While arts and physical education are not the express focus of ECHS, students should be given the opportunity to learn from such disciplines as well as gain an understanding of how these disciplines can be explored in higher education.

Problem Statement 4:

In what ways might the 11th-12th grade classrooms enhance the college-like feel of Early College High School?

The primary learning environments for 11th-12th graders, in particular, in order to prepare for higher learning, must be more deeply integrated with shared student services.

Problem Statement 5:

In what ways might interactions between students at diverse developmental stages be managed?

The major developmental groupings that must be supported will be 9th-10th grade learners, 11th-12th grade learners, learners from higher education, and eventually 6th-8th grade learners.

Problem Statement 6:

In what ways might the learning environment enhance teacher-to-teacher and teacher-to-external stakeholder connections?

In order to ensure the success of ECHS students, teachers must collaborate vertically (between grade levels) as well as horizontally (between disciplines).

Problem Statement 7:

In what ways might students connect with external stakeholders?

Interactions with external stakeholders, like business leaders, will give ECHS students, authentic real-world

Problem Statement 8:

In what ways might students connect with teachers in order to enhance informal/unstructured learning? *It is imperative that ECHS students learn how to manage and successfully utilize unstructured/unscheduled time in order to advance through college. Students must learn how to use this time for informal learning opportunities.*

Problem Statement 9:

In what ways might the presence of scaffolding enhance successful college-like behavior among students? *Students must understand how to find and personalize the use of scaffolding such as counseling services in order to prepare for success in higher education. The environment must support ECHS staff in efforts to help make this scaffolding successful. For example, administrative staff must be decentralized throughout the campus.*

Problem Statement 10:

In what ways might shared student services be integrated with a centralized student space? *Because this environment must be student-centric and focused on success in college, shared student services (i.e. Media Center Computer Labs & College Counseling Services) should be adjacent and fully integrated with the students' daily lives.*

The visioning document, the architectural problem statements, and the later developed summary of spaces went into a creative brief. After the initial designs were complete, the Creative Brief and the design solution were presented to the stakeholders for final review (a copy of this Creative Brief is included in Appendix B).

After completion of the project, the stakeholders were amazed at how well the design team was able to capture their vision and turn it into a reality. They felt that nothing was missed.

CAMBRIDGE
STRATEGIC SERVICES

Dallas Independent School District

SHWGROUP

DALLAS ISD
EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL VISIONING

DALLAS ISD EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL VISIONING

VISIONING PROCESS

- 1 Process Development**
Conduct awareness session/s with key administrators
- 2 Build Visioning Task Force**
Develop Task Force to include stakeholders representing various sectors of school district, including participants such as parents, community members, business leaders, post secondary education, administrators, teachers and students (Either involve students in the Visioning Task Force, or create a separate Student Committee)
- 3 Research**
Identify books or articles for all task force members to read that will challenge the thinking of the task force members
- 4 Vital Signs**
Assemble and analyze essential information about the district/program as a basis for planning
 - ▶ Current DISD Educational Programming – instruction, curriculum, technology, special programs
 - ▶ Current DISD early college credit programs and enrollment
- 5 Visioning Workshops**
Conduct Visioning Workshops to develop Findings and Directions that are aligned with the mission and core values of the program that will serve as a guide for the early high school program and new facility – a plan that allows "instruction to drive construction."
 - ▶ Review research reading
 - ▶ Develop mission/vision/objectives of program
 - ▶ 10 Years From Now discussion
 - ▶ Discuss open-ended questions
 - ▶ Develop Findings - statements about how instruction should be delivered and how program will be organized; develop Directions - statements about how the Findings should be accomplished
- 6 Approval**
Obtain Superintendent approval for the Findings and Directions

VISIONING PROCESS 2

During the Visioning process, students and staff at their current early college high school responded to the following ideas about what their new campus environment could be like.

Students were asked the following questions:

Imagine that you are standing on your future college campus for the first time.

What types of things do you see, smell, hear or feel that let you know it is a college and not a high school?

Student responses were gathered using Survey Monkey to create the following results, that gave insight into the students thoughts.

I see . . .

an opportunity to become something in life professors
pressure students everywhere **career and my future**
open spaces (courtyards) resources a good staff
real life friendly faces **stress free environment**
café **enthusiastic** laptops the outdoors
study areas teamwork school mascot
monuments books conversations **lots of windows**
big computer labs large learning centers statues
beautiful buildings **educated students eager to learn**
mature students excitement people laughing
plants **people trying to make something of themselves**
lots colorful walls library a building with our name on it
lots of kids joining things. flowers long hallways
ECHS w. cedar Valley 1st Class Monument clean halls

I smell . . .

variety **bright future, brand new** air freshner
good food library books good **newly fresh cut lawn**
victory Febreeze a lake perfume or cologne
new paint **fresh flowers** a smell like Pine-Sol
cakes that the kids made new car smell **printed paper**
success restaurants the beach and the ocean
great the outdoors **freedom**
glade air scents **relaxation** fresh and clean
candy and lavender **nothing like high school**
tropical punch new school nature and plants
spring or summer day plants nothing reheated
new carpet **success** cleaning supplies
fresh air nothing like sewage **accomplishment**
Lysol **newly fresh cut lawn** McDonalds

I hear . . .

college activities a calm professor talking
food being cooked printers **happiness in one's voice**
no bells **music** chatting my friend's laughter
footsteps going to class **groups studying and sharing ideas**
positive reinforcement everybody going wow
lots of different sounds opportunity air flowing
people on laptops **inspirational words**
socializing people talking about their future silence
lockers learning **leaves of a moving tree**
life experience teachers teaching soothing
lectures and debates **spring or summer day**
a school radio station birds chirping
sorority stepping **shuffling papers** announcements
lots of people working in the main office **campus uplifting**

I feel . . .

excitement **independent** curious energizing
safe and free mature **like a second home**
exploration talented like a better person happy
good vibe **a comfortable environment** intelligent
anticipation like a young adult shy eager
nervous because I'm the youngest one there new
older not tired **like I belong** adventurous
like someone isn't constantly looking over my shoulder
destiny important the door I will be opening
sophisticated tense and worried anxious
free from adults secure **imaginative**
motivated to learn grown up rolling chairs
like I'm on a campus **professional atmosphere**
like an adult taking responsibility for my future **joyful**

I Educational Environment

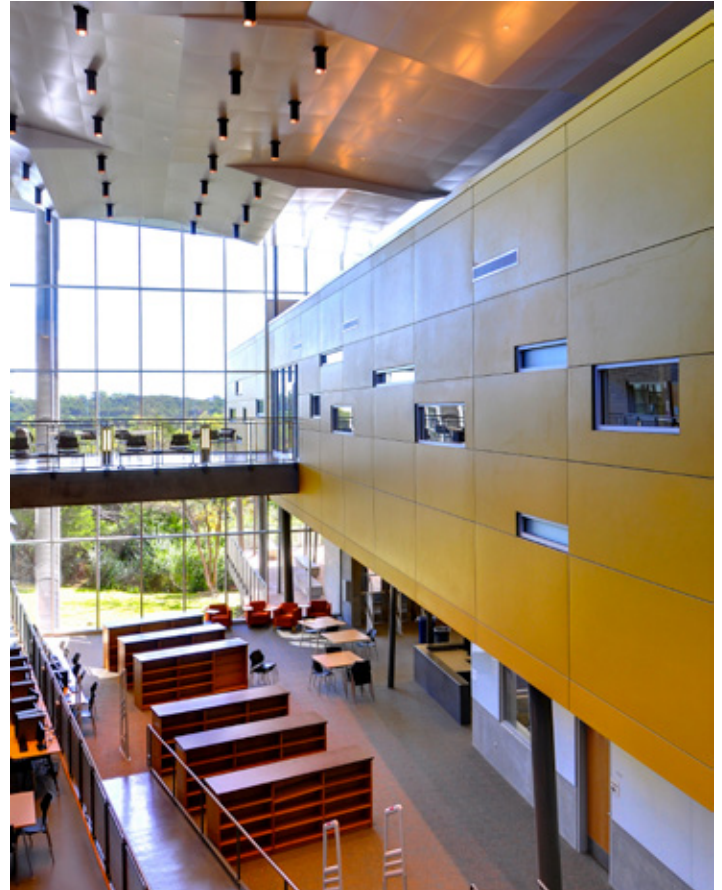


This 106,000-square-foot facility is designed to mirror a collegiate environment while maintaining the supervision appropriate for high school students. The building is made up of a series of academic and social spaces centered around a common area. These separate areas give the facility the feel of a multiple-building campus, similar to a college, while keeping the students in a secure environment.

The two-story building provides varied academic and social experiences for 9th-10th and 11th-12th grade students. Higher grade levels are housed on the first floor, allowing for more freedom and unstructured time, and thus, more informal learning areas. The lower grade levels, which are located on the second floor, have more structure, a more controlled environment and a more structured learning environment.

The facility incorporates multiple spaces for informal learning to assert the importance of planning unstructured time. Open visibility to all spaces allows staff to maximize supervision, providing transparency and accountability, while still encouraging self-directed learning. The design team took into account the importance of acoustics by incorporating rubber flooring and ceiling paneling to absorb sound in these informal learning spaces so group study would not disrupt the surrounding classrooms.

Administration, teachers and counselors are distributed to be integral and in close proximity to students daily life. Bold colors are used to highlight these spaces to draw student attention.



Instead of traditional “home rooms,” faculty offices are located in a “perch,” which is a large, cubic space suspended on the second floor. From this space, faculty can view the various academic spaces. As is the case in a collegiate environment, students must seek out teachers or counselors when they need help outside of their normal class.

The “perch” location on the second floor allows younger students closer proximity to teachers, providing more structure and supervision. Cedar Valley College provides college courses and other resources to students. The GO Center in the academy helps guide students in their decisions about college and career.





“Exemplary example of what an early college high school can look like. There’s joy in teaching and learning in this school.”

*Carla Renger
Board Member Dallas ISD*

I Physical Environment



A pedestrian-friendly walk up not only contributes to the collegiate feel but also allows easy access for the large number of students who utilize public transportation.

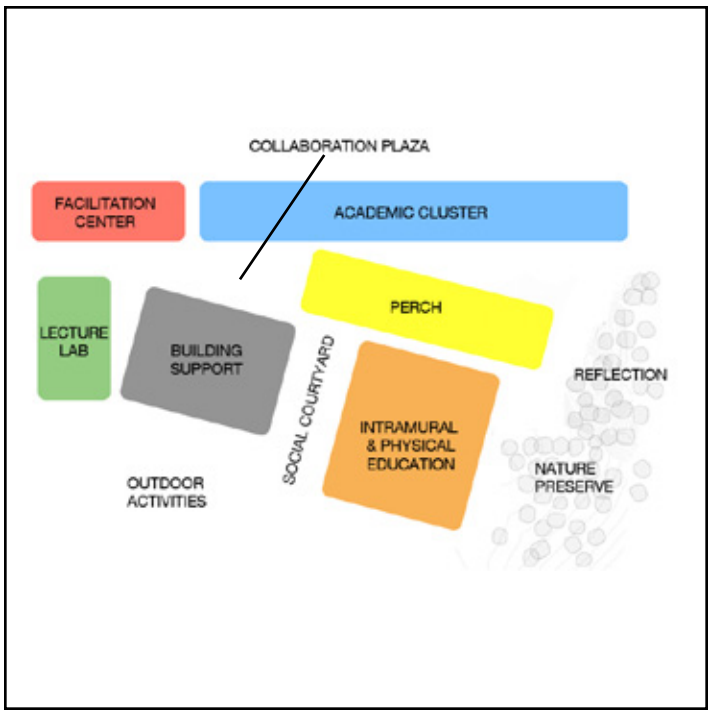
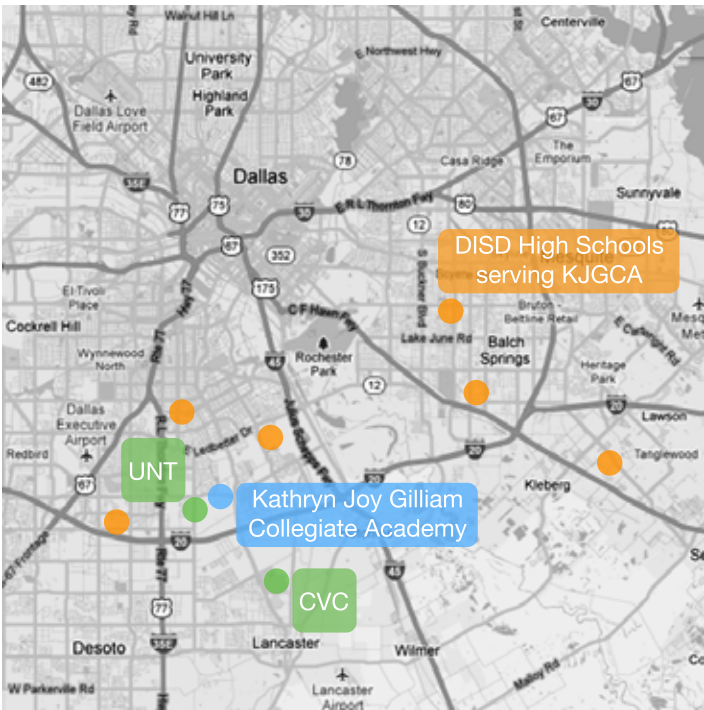
Many of the spaces are multifunctional to allow for a variety of different teaching and learning styles. As a byproduct, the money saved in square footage was able to be used to incorporate high-end finishes, which further enhance the aesthetics.



Unique exterior fenestration material on each of the facades, the elimination of lockers, and an enclosed plaza contribute to the professional, collegiate feel.

The school's location on a 10-acre greenfield site adjacent to a nature preserve south of Dallas overlooking the downtown skyline provides a unique juxtaposition of natural and metropolitan landscape. The building also incorporates a number of sustainable features, including daylighting, low-VOC paint, geothermal mechanical system, recycled materials, and enhance acoustical separation. In addition, the school is certified by the Collaborative for High Performance Schools (Texas CHPS), the nation's first green building rating program especially designed for K-12 schools.

The early college high school is located in the South Dallas area to serve the six area high schools that are within the Cedar Valley Community College attendance zone - a college within the Dallas County Community College District. The project is nestled in the northeast corner of University of North Texas' South (Dallas) campus providing easy access to the area university and to Cedar Valley Community College that is located less than four miles away. It is also located less than one-half mile from the area police substation and community recreation center. The campus is located within one-half mile of a Dallas Area Rapid Transit bus stop for use by the students. In the future, students will be able to access the bus at the site or walk less than a quarter mile to the DART rail system that will stop at the UNT Dallas campus.



ABOVE
The campus is in close proximity to two collegiate campuses, UNT and CVC.

ABOVE
Proximity relationship of school program.





“This building exemplifies our mission statement. College access and success for all. It is a learning environment built for success and college access.”

*Ms. Gayle F. Smith
Principal, Kathlyn Joy Gilliam
Collegiate Academy*

I Results of the Process & Project

Now in its first year of classes, Gilliam Collegiate Academy is providing students the opportunity to complete high school courses, earn up to 60 transferable college credit hours and help them understand and prepare for the more self-paced learning typical of a collegiate environment.

The facility is designed specifically to support the district's goal of narrowing the achievement gap by providing a unique, flexible environment that caters specifically to first-generation college students. Graduates from Gilliam Collegiate Academy will enter college prepared for the rigors of higher education and confident in their ability to succeed.

Parent and community involvement is very crucial in ensuring overall student success. A group of parents, students, and other members of the community were identified as stakeholders and were involved from the very beginning. Multiple presentations about the school and its application process were held for the public during design and construction phases.





Stage has flexibility to be indoor/outdoor stage or classroom.



Value of Process and Project to the community at large

The city anticipates revitalizing this part of the city and has provided a police substation, land for a university campus, rapid public transportation, and other amenities in its master urban development plan. The school district worked with the university to locate this school in the corner of the university's campus. It is also located less than four miles from Cedar Valley Community College.

The students have the opportunity to take college classes on campus, at UNT, or at Cedar Valley Community College along with their high school classes. Amenities inside the building are also designed to encourage parent and community involvement. The Go Center which houses computers and counselors is also open to parents and other members of the community to help them research about college courses or job openings.

The building has a tiered lecture hall with stage which can be closed off from the rest of the building to provide a gathering space for the community.



The building has a tiered lecture hall with stage which can be closed off from the rest of the building to provide a gathering space for the community. The stage functions as an indoor/ outdoor stage to be used with the lecture hall or the outdoor amphitheater. The building is intended to be used to provide the community access to books and technology. The community may also use the facility for neighborhood events and in obtaining a G.E.D.

This school empowers the students living in this area to choose early college high school to help achieve college success.