

2020 SUBMISSION - JAMES D. MACCONNELL AWARD

ARKANSAS ARTS ACADEMY

Rogers, Arkansas



Executive Summary

Arts Integration in Education A Community Production

THE SCRIPT

Fueled by a belief that a segment of students “just can’t be canned” by a curriculum, along with the desire to see those students succeed through integrating the arts into education, the newly hired CEO of the Arkansas Arts Academy began her quest to “make it what it should be.”

When Mary Ley came to the public charter school in 2014, she discovered that the original high school lacked the resources and facility for a true arts-integrated curriculum. Located in historic downtown Rogers, the existing campus was originally a church comprising three structures built in different eras.

Northwest Arkansas’s dramatic entrance into the arts scene with the opening of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in 2011, provided a fertile environment to plant and grow the new concept for the Arkansas Arts Academy.

THE CAST AND CREW

Reaching out to a local architecture firm to develop a design that united the existing campus buildings and created the spaces necessary for the desired programming was

the next step. Knowing that finances for the charter school project were very limited, the firm invited their interns to participate in a charette process to generate design solutions that could be reviewed by the Academy’s team.

“We were on the front steps of that old church building where the pillars were, and we had six or eight young men and women that want to be great architects, and I started telling them what we wanted”, Mary related. “We wanted a place that inspired children, we wanted a place where they can think creatively, we wanted a lot of light, and we didn’t want a flat roof.”

With no typical programming blueprint for this type of school, the architect created the building to accommodate the desired curriculum, rather than having the curriculum adapt to the building.

Next, other supporters of the arts in the community were invited to join the Academy’s team and give input as the various design solutions from the architect were revealed. One concept in particular caught everyone’s attention, and the group unanimously agreed to develop that design solution.

“...we took a 200-student non-existent arts school to every kind of dream level...the architecture and the design of the school made it all possible.”

Mary Ley, Chief Executive Officer



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Executive Summary

“Take it from the top.”

THE SUPPORTING CAST

After presenting the preliminary design concept to a benefactor of the Academy, the challenge was issued to develop a formal ten-year plan. Costs for the desired curriculum including culinary, ceramics, recording studio, and all the amenities for an arts school were compiled and a preliminary budget was established.

The generous financial support of this benefactor covered the legal costs associated with the refinancing of the bonds on the property, dropping them from 6.3% to 4%, which made it possible to generate the funds for the project. Because of the work done ahead of time by those investors, bonds totaling 17 million dollars sold in one hour.

With the benefactor’s financial support conditioned on 600 students in the high school, the Academy made the decision to integrate 7th and 8th grade students into the building. After meeting with parents, the solution was to locate these students in their own academic wing in the original building. This area was to be remodeled, parents were satisfied, and the project moved forward.

SETTING THE STAGE

The ability to incorporate abundant community resources was a priority in the strategy of the curriculum and planning of the facility. World-class art collections at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, regional history exhibits, Native American artifact collections, symphony performances, vibrant theater and dance groups, the Arkansas Music Pavilion, a culinary “food as art” movement, and the network of excellent bike trails were all threads of the community which would be woven together to benefit the students.

Through a series of meetings with faculty and staff, surveys of students, and collaboration with community stakeholders, the final design for the addition and major renovation was completed.

ACTION!

The project included demolition of one original building and construction of a new two-story building in its place. The construction process took place while school was still in session on the campus, creating both logistical challenges and excitement. External corridors were created using shipping containers for safe and secure student conveyance.

The Academy still placed in the top five high schools in the state that year.

A central core of public spaces, composed of the performing arts center, Commons, and the courtyard was formed by joining two remaining buildings on the site with the addition of new structures.

CURTAIN CALL

The final result created dynamic learning spaces for the Academy’s Arts Integration curriculum that promotes interaction with the community and exploration of all the arts.

This fundamental foundation was manifested in the architecture through program adjacencies, flexible spaces, forms, varying spatial volumes, and classroom organization. The spaces provide parallel teaching and learning opportunities, and stimulate the student’s artistic creativity.



Scope of Work & Budget



OWNER:
Arkansas Arts Academy
LOCATION:
Rogers, Arkansas

OCCUPANCY DATE:
August 2018 New Construction
January 2019 Renovated

GRADES:
7-12
STUDENT CAPACITY:
650

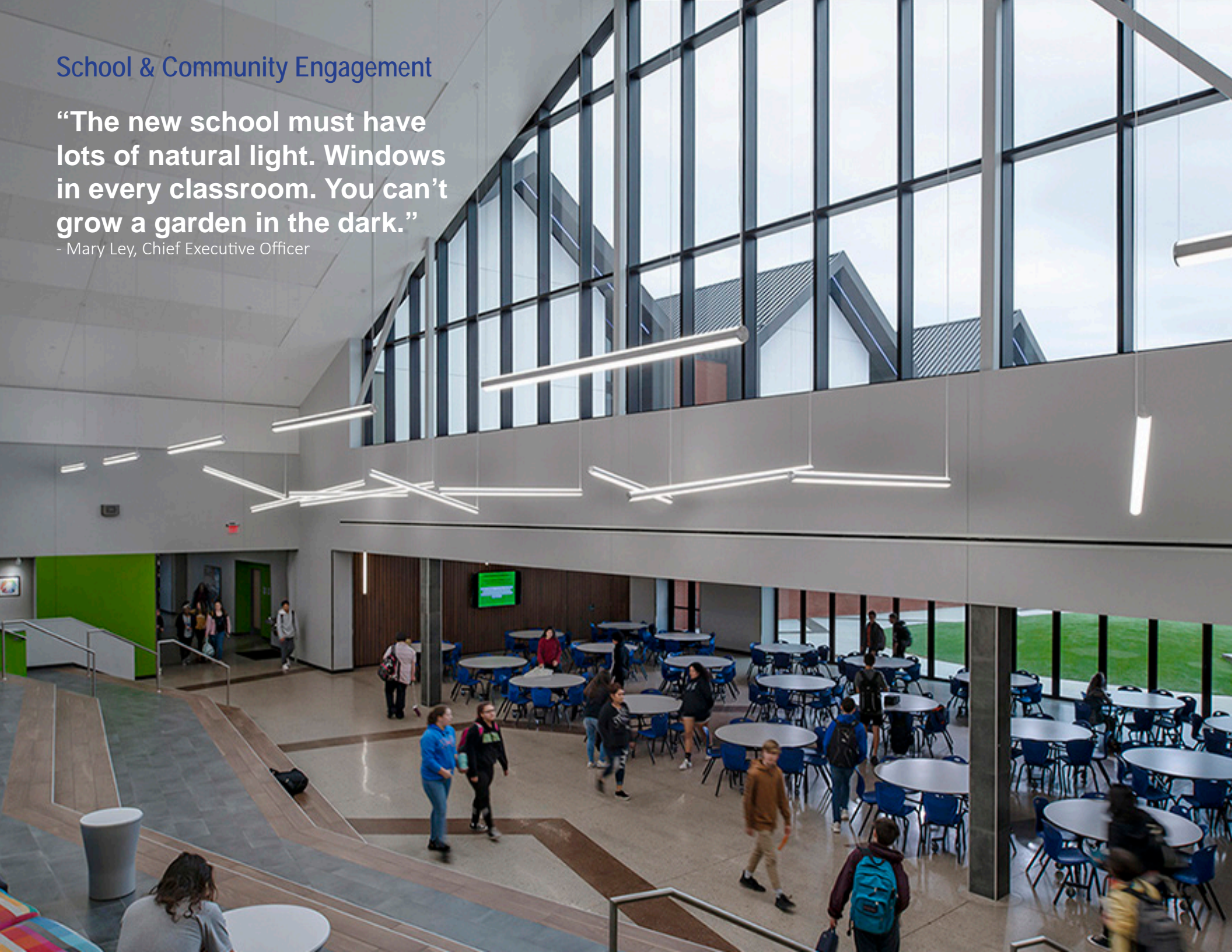
TOTAL SQ FT NEW CONSTRUCTION:
67,463
TOTAL SQ FT RENOVATION:
22,380

SITE AREA:
2.8 Acres
CONSTRUCTION COST:
\$19,735,206

School & Community Engagement

“The new school must have lots of natural light. Windows in every classroom. You can’t grow a garden in the dark.”

- Mary Ley, Chief Executive Officer



School & Community Engagement - COLLABORATING WITH EDUCATORS AND CREATIVES

THE COMMUNITY

Northwest Arkansas is a growing community of successful businesses, natural resources, thriving arts and entertainment, historical interests, bike trails and an abundance of outdoor activities, and has been ranked in the top five “best places to live” for several years in a row by national publications including U.S. News and World Report.

The Arkansas Arts Academy is located in an historic neighborhood in downtown Rogers. During the design of the new facility, the City approved a new Downtown Rogers Initiative Plan, and the Academy became the first building project completed under that new code.

It was a priority to include community input during each stage of the design process, especially the residential neighbors. The forms created for the new structure resemble the neighborhood context and the existing structures that remained on the site. The design compliments the historic neighborhood’s character with its repeated gable forms.

THE STAKEHOLDERS

Through informational community meetings, faculty surveys, Academy leadership team planning meetings, and student “wish lists”, a cohesive program was created.

During the planning and design process stakeholders reinforced the desire to **“take all these threads of our community and weave them together so the kids benefit.”**



“It was truly a team effort.” - Administrator

School & Community Engagement - COLLABORATING WITH EDUCATORS AND CREATIVES

CHALLENGES

- disconnected existing campus buildings
- compact site in historic neighborhood
- creating a cohesive design
- providing space for variety of instructional needs
- conducting classes on an active construction site

AVAILABLE ASSETS

- amazing team of administrators and educators
- a vision of what the Academy could be
- motivated students
- engaged community leaders

VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY

- renovating and upgrading a building in the downtown community
- houses surrounding the Academy have since been remodeled and property values have increased in the vicinity of the school
- community performances and art exhibits

Survey of Arkansas Arts Academy High School Staff

Indicating why a special facility was needed



100%

expressed willingness to share the new facility with community arts organizations



91%

believed that partnership with Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art is vital to success at the school



85%

had created lessons with arts integration



73%

expressed desire for ongoing programming while collaborating with community arts organizations

Educational Environment

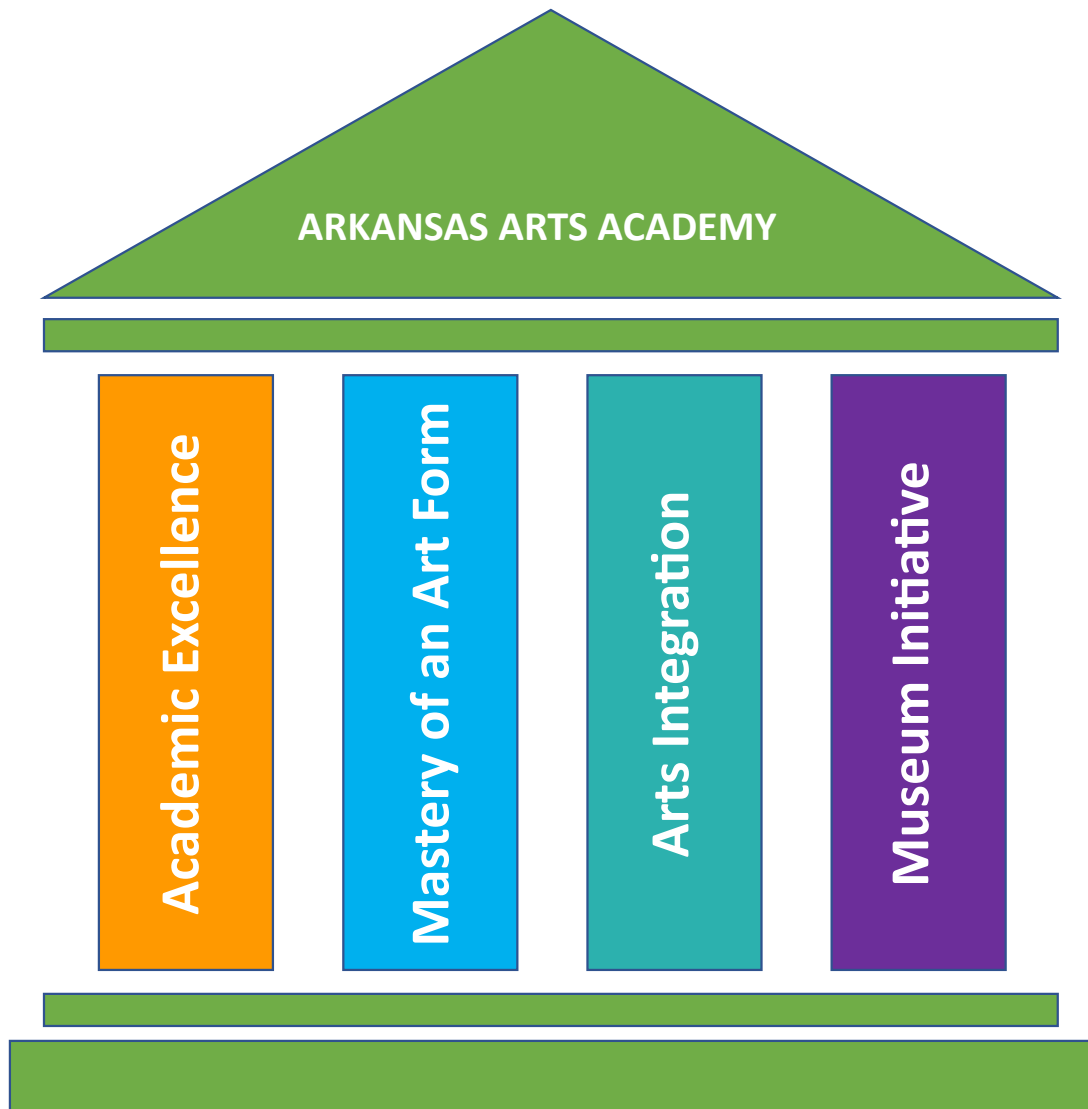
The goal of Arkansas Arts Academy is to become a nationally recognized institution that will draw students from all over Northwest Arkansas, the state, and the region. In 2014 there were 350 students enrolled. Currently, there are 638 students enrolled for fall 2020, from 14 area school districts.

- **Graduation rate is above 94%, with over 70% enrolling in college**
- **Percentage of students in grades 3-10 meeting or exceeding standard on ACT Aspire 2019 was higher than the state average in 2018**
- **U.S. News & World Report ranked the high school as the #5 top high school in the state**
- **AAA High School has received an “A” report from the state since the inception of the ranking system**
- **2018-2019 academic year, AAA employed 45 core teachers, 32 fine arts and elective teachers, 5 special education teachers, 3 interventionists, 3 counselors, and 15 other academic and school support staff**

Arkansas Arts Academy believes that an arts-based approach to learning promotes creative expression and an enhanced academic experience. The Academy's mission is to provide a rigorous academic program with a purposeful integration of the arts. Students are challenged academically and provided with an arts-enhanced curriculum.

Arkansas Arts Academy's education is based on the foundation of four pillars

Educational Environment - THE ACADEMY'S FOUR PILLARS OF EDUCATION



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

AAA provides an academically rigorous and innovative curriculum with personalized student learning environments that result in college and career ready students.

MASTERY OF AN ART FORM

AAA provides methodical art-focused programming where students master the creating and performing of the arts. Upon graduation, students will transition to post-secondary opportunities in the arts, careers in the fine arts, or pursue non-art pathways while remaining life-long advocates for the arts.

ARTS INTEGRATION

As an approach to teaching, arts integration assists both teachers and students to construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both.

MUSEUM INITIATIVE

Northwest Arkansas is rich in heritage with supporting learning centers and museums. By partnering with local and regional museums, AAA extends the classroom to establish connections to the diverse resources and experiences offered by collections housed in historical, natural, fine art and science museums, or sites. Building student awareness of the variety of museums and non-profit careers is an integral part of this initiative.

Educational Environment - SUPPORTING THE CURRICULUM

Academic Excellence

The innovative school program has made a crucial and pivotal impact on the educational environment as well as the capacity of the student population. The new facility increased the square footage by 31.14% and houses 33 functional classrooms, additional offices, and designated multi-purpose/programmable spaces. Since completion, the high school spaces have been transformed into contemporary classrooms with additional spaces for an assistant principal, counselor suite, nurse's office, media specialist, 17 core teachers, and 21 fine arts teachers.

Since completion of the new facility, enrollment has dramatically increased, and there are over 1,000 students on a waiting list to enroll in the Arkansas Arts Academy.



“...great spaces help us connect to the potential within ourselves, and I see that happening every day at Arkansas Arts Academy.”

- Teacher

Educational Environment - SUPPORTING THE CURRICULUM

Mastery of an Art Form

The new school design has allowed the curriculum to extend beyond one visual arts teacher, two music teachers, and a dance teacher. The current structure affords the Academy to improve and expand offerings of fine arts classes including:

- an instructional kitchen for culinary classes
- video game design
- creative writing
- song writing
- a dance studio for ballet, choreography, and modern dance
- additional visual arts studios (a ceramic and two 2-D studios)
- fashion design
- new media and digital arts
- electric bass
- percussion
- music tech
- videography
- all aspects of theater



Educational Environment - SUPPORTING THE CURRICULUM



Defined areas provide an educational environment that supports the curriculum by providing collaboration spaces within the hallways, display and gallery spaces with the track lighting systems to highlight student art on walls made of self-healing material for a maintenance free display.

The light-filled Commons is a flexible multipurpose space which can function as a performance venue, a display area of visual art, as well as a student gathering location for announcements, meetings, lectures, or instruction.

The arts are integrated into each core subject of study and students are inspired and challenged by assignments which require deeper exploration of the artistic method as well as the course of study.



SCIENCE
Culinary Arts and human cells



HISTORY
Printmaking to enhance studies of the Tokugawa era of Japan



ENGLISH
Homer's *The Odyssey*, incorporating 3D sculpture/Dioramas



MATH
Deconstructing Calder, an arts integration investigation into the mathematical design of mobiles

Educational Environment - SUPPORTING THE CURRICULUM

Museum Initiative

The Academy is committed to providing meaningful and engaging educational experiences that value creativity in all aspects of the curriculum. Fine arts teachers, guest professional artists, and a robust program of partnerships with educational institutions across Northwest Arkansas further enrich the student's education and their experience with multiple art forms. Currently AAA partners with nine museums and several professional arts and social service organizations to deliver a wide range of experiences to its students. When asked how the building design supports the Museum Initiative, the Academy's CEO responded:

“The building design raises the bar for the Academy, giving us an equality with Crystal Bridges...it creates a synergy between the two...an equality between the museum experience and the school experience.”



AAA Night @ the Museum is a special event held each semester that celebrates the partnership between Arkansas Arts Academy and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. During the fall semester, the core teachers develop creative projects allowing students to demonstrate their research and critical thinking skills tied to specific works of art. In the spring semester, the students showcase their artistic talents and perform original works that are inspired by the art, architecture, and natural setting throughout the Museum.



Educational Environment
SUPPORTING A VARIETY OF LEARNING
AND TEACHING STYLES



Studio spaces and fine arts classrooms were intentionally designed to be larger than traditional school studios. Arkansas Arts Academy is arts-focused and serves a larger population of artistic students than traditional districts.

Educational Environment SUPPORTING A VARIETY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING STYLES



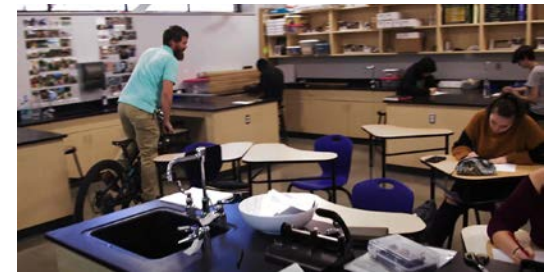
“It’s a unique thing...I don’t know of many places around the country that have courses for playing in rock bands, song writing classes, audio production, electric guitar, acoustic guitar...and everything from beginner through advanced players.” - Music Director

In addition to more traditional science and chemistry labs, the Academy offers studio classes where students might perform other types of experiments.

Because multiple classes in art form are offered, the studios also include additional space for distinct purposes such as storage, practice rooms, recording spaces, wet media, glazing, etc. Other spaces were specifically designed as classrooms for digital media, performance, and lectures. Special attention and engineering was dedicated to the guitar studio and the orchestra and choir rooms, both for acoustic sound quality and the capability to record in these spaces.

Having industrial deep bay sinks in each hallway allows all teachers in the high school the opportunity to offer arts integration lessons that would require water or any form of wet media.

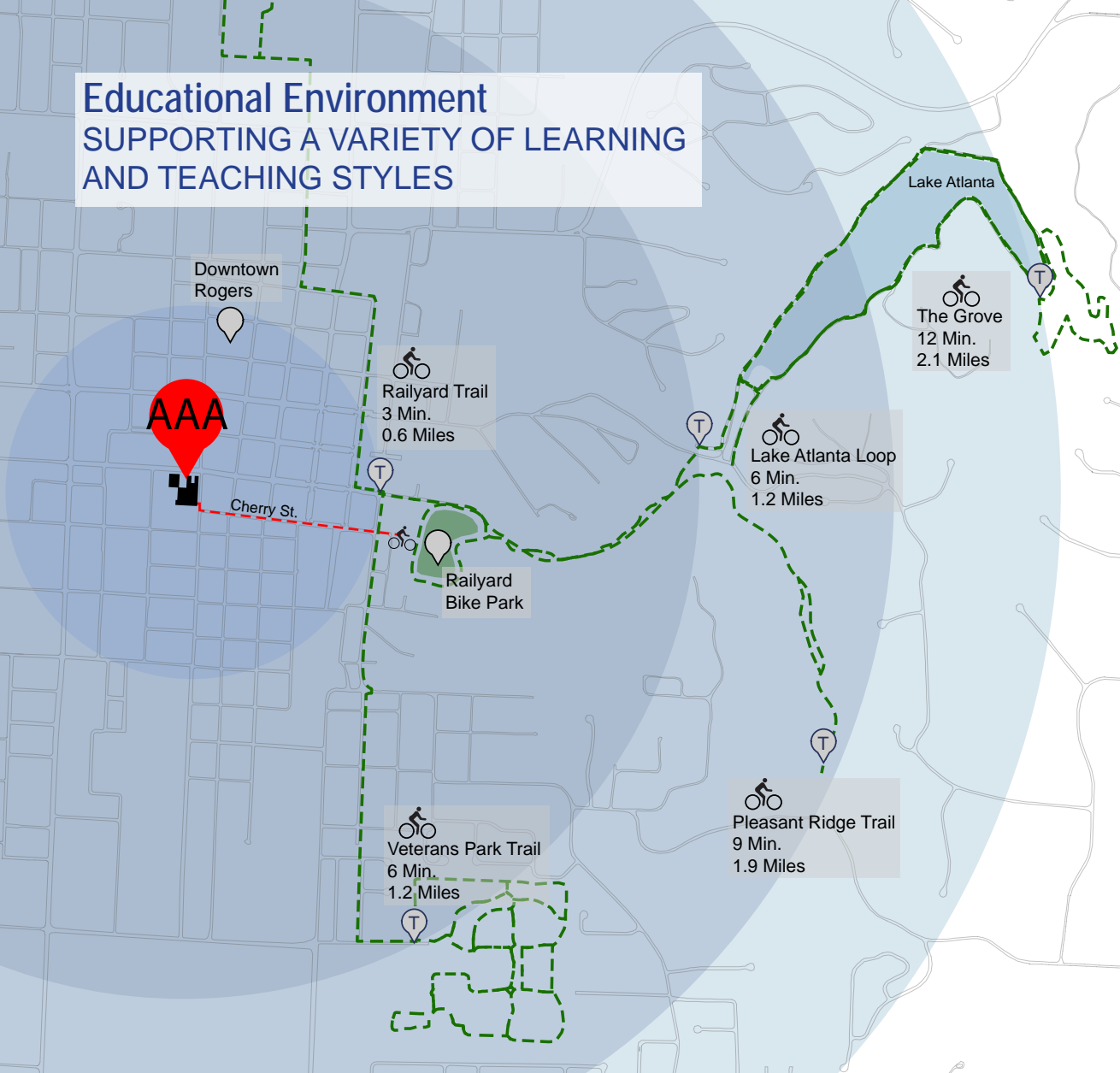
Even in the most traditional core subject classes, innovative teaching styles are encouraged and implemented.



For example, one of the Academy’s calculus instructors rides a bike while teaching his class, creating an energy that holds the students’ attention and keeps them engaged with the lesson.



Educational Environment SUPPORTING A VARIETY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING STYLES



The Arkansas High School Cycling League was organized in 2014, and the Arkansas Arts Academy was the first public school to sign on.

The campus is situated just minutes away from several area bike trails, making it ideal for the students and instructors to take full advantage of their class time.

The bike room was intentionally located at the corner of the building on Cherry Street, which provides a direct connection to the Railyard Bike Park.

Educational Environment ADAPTABLE AND FLEXIBLE

The Academy is a visual and performing arts school, so the spaces were designed to provide locations for various types and sizes of performances and exhibitions. The Commons area, the largest and most versatile space in the school, is the strongest example of how the new environment is adaptable and flexible. The 3,400 sf space serves as the central hub of the school, connecting the three wings of the campus. The space is open, with two distinct areas serving as multi-functional spaces. The larger volume features a geometric tiered seating area designed to promote student interaction and collaboration. The expansive north facing curtain wall naturalizes the space with ambient light. Contemporary light fixtures provide inspirational light for evenings, but also provide an artistic aesthetic that enhances the creative spirit.

This space is ideal for gathering students and classes for announcements as well as a casual venue for performing. Coffee House is a regularly scheduled event held in the Commons where students sign up to perform. A piano located at the top of the landing draws students to play and sing together during a typical school day. This area is also equipped so that any presentation or performance can be recorded.

The other area of the Commons space has a lower wood clad ceiling, providing a more intimate space. This area functions as the student dining area, but also serves as a space for classes, culinary events, school dances, lectures, staff meetings, exhibitions, small performances, and community events.

At the North end of the Commons, the forty-foot wide glass accordion doors open to the outdoor courtyard berm which is covered with artificial turf for students to lounge and socialize during lunch and breaks. The courtyard also serves as a venue for concerts and performances. The outdoor space also features large areas of natural soil which have been sectioned off from the artificial turf. This garden area is used for the science classes to grow plants and as an outdoor classroom.

The flexibility of the Black Box theater allows for a limitless amount of activities. It has served as a perfect location for more intimate performances such as acoustic guitar concerts, individual dance recitals, poetry slams, and spoken word performances.

The bike room is also adaptable for physical education. In addition to being the location for storage of mountain bikes as well as stationary workout bikes (used when the weather is unfavorable), the space can be cleared for other recreational activities such as yoga, ping-pong, badminton, and volley ball.



Physical Environment

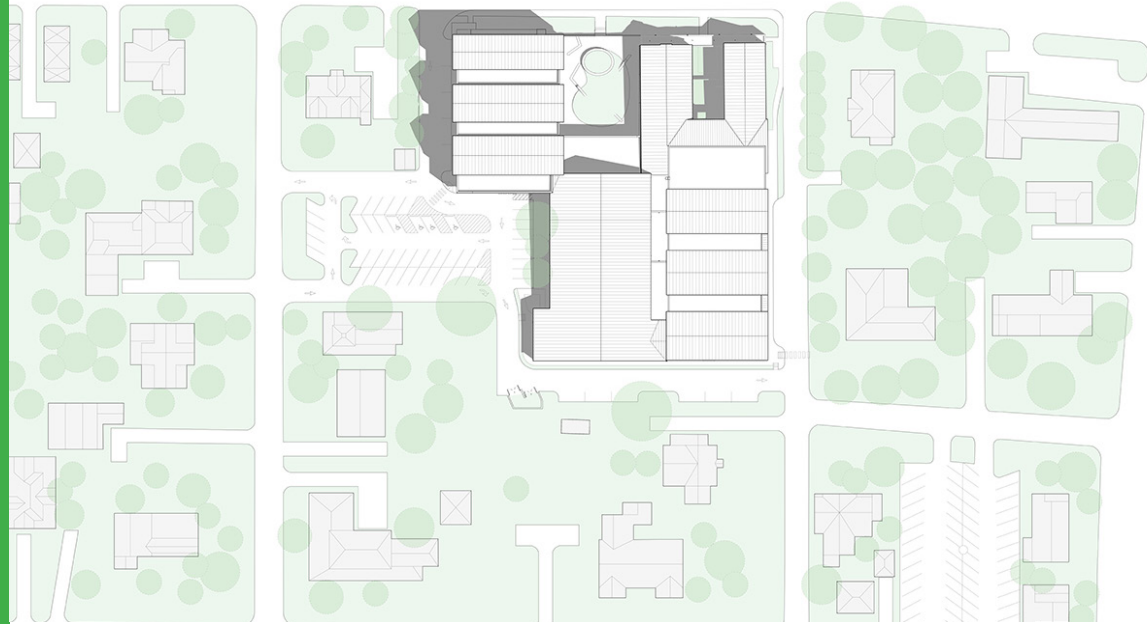


“I love driving past the building on the weekend and seeing those three A-shaped roof lines, inscribing our name and our aspirations on the surrounding neighborhood.” - Teacher

Physical Environment - THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The Academy is built in the heart of the historic district of Rogers, nestled within a residential area of beautifully restored historic homes. The Academy wanted the architecture to be distinctive, but also to complement the neighboring community. The repeated gabled roofs on the major buildings kept the integrity of the architectural theme with both the residential and commercial structures in the downtown Rogers area. The completed design of the school not only enhances the historic district of Rogers, but upgrades the aesthetics of the community with its contemporary accents of neon and novel composition, creating a sense of pride for students who attend Arkansas Arts Academy.

The Academy serves as a beacon of creativity and free-choice public education for the immediate and surrounding communities. Student performances and shows are open to the public to attend, providing citizens of the community opportunities for entertainment, ways to collaborate with the school, and celebrate the necessity and power of the arts. Neighbors of the Academy are often given free tickets to performances, and enjoy getting to know the students whose talents are on display.



The school complements the neighborhood's character with its repeated gable forms. This articulation helps break up the structures, resulting in a sensible scale.



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Physical Environment - DISCONNECTED EXISTING COMPONENTS



The existing campus was originally a church composed of three structures built in different eras. With varying aesthetics, the original church structures were constructed with traditional gable roof forms, red brick, and were physically separated on the site.

For the new construction exterior, the intent was to create a physically unified campus. As a result, exterior materials at the base level of the buildings and the forms created for the new structure resemble the neighborhood context and the existing structures that remained on the site.

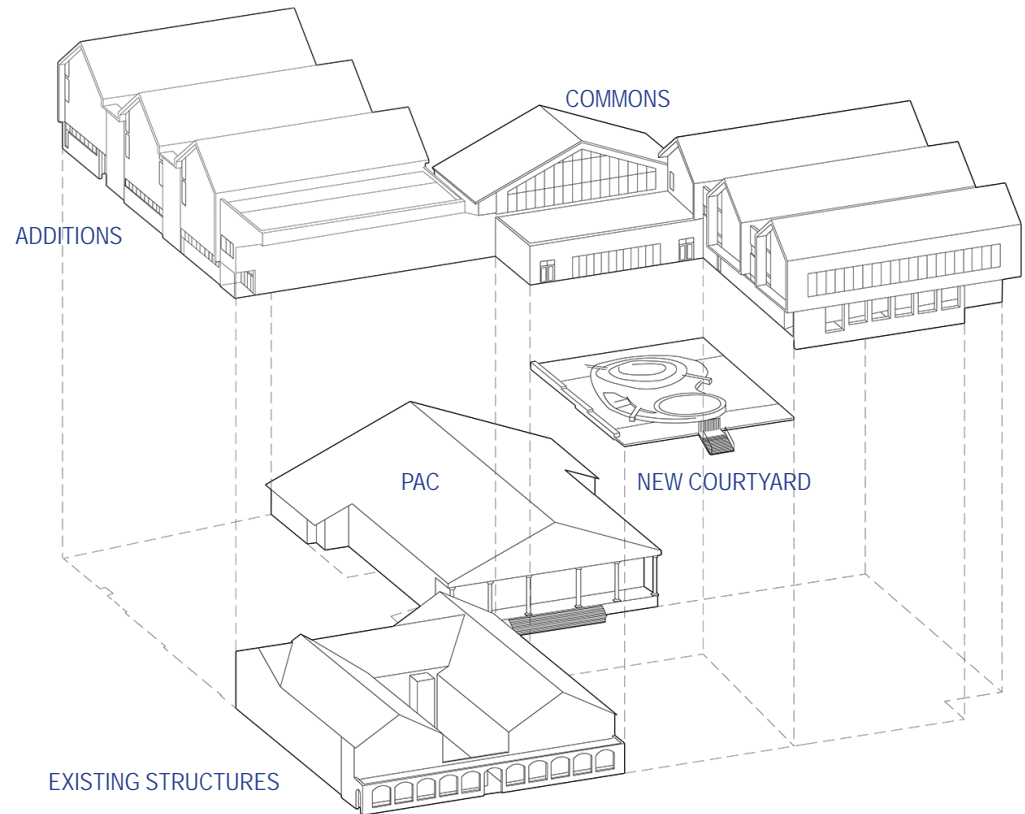


Physical Environment - TYING THE CAMPUS TOGETHER

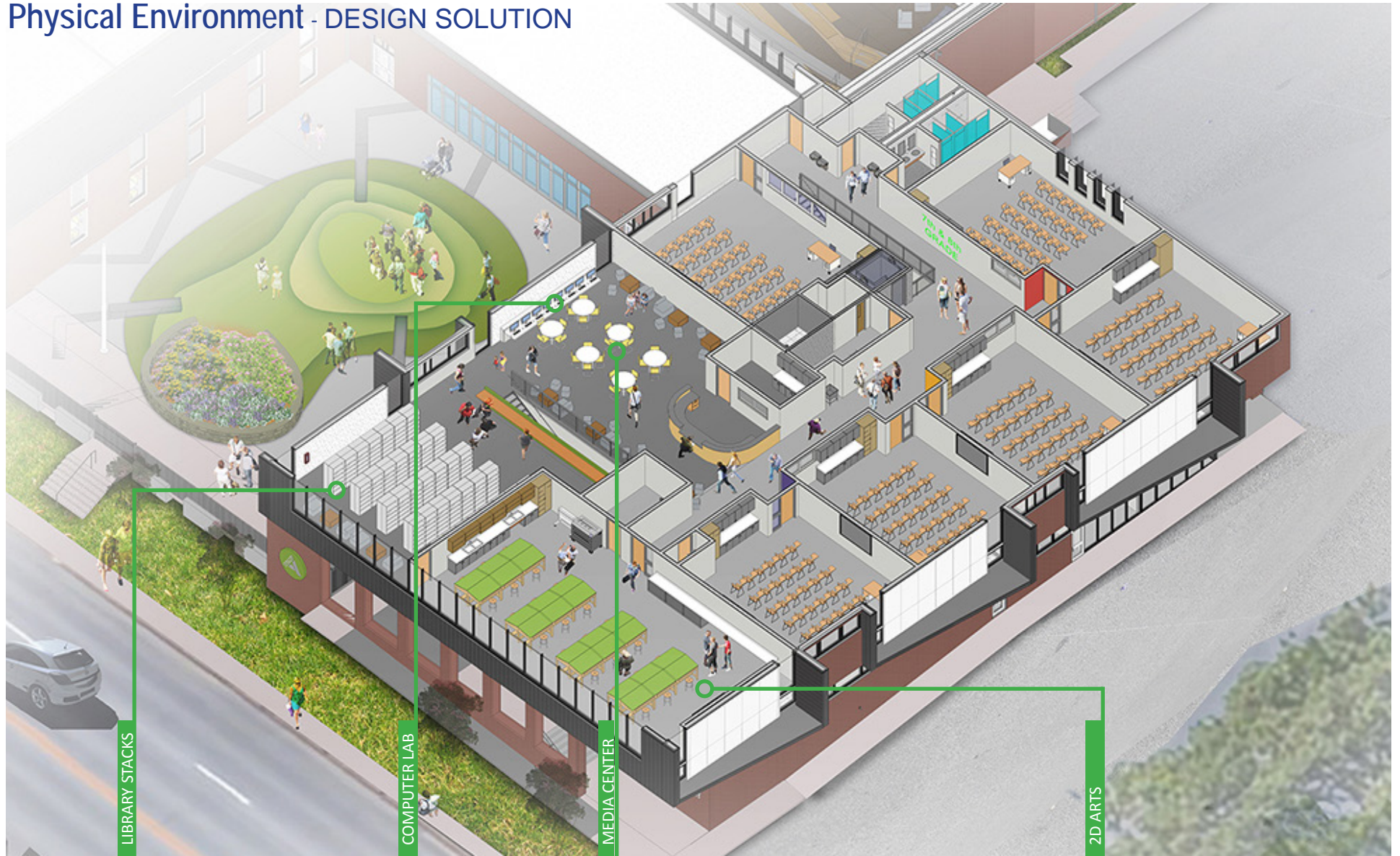
Because space on the site was restricted, the strategy was to utilize every square foot possible to create educational spaces. There are non-traditional classrooms and collaboration spaces built within corridors as well as activated functional exterior courtyards.

The two existing buildings that remained on the site, with the addition of new structures, form a central core of assembly/public spaces comprising the performing arts center, Commons and the courtyard. The extension to the front of the performing arts center within the new Commons has newly configured steps that promote student interaction, and the large landings can serve as platform stages. The continuation of the existing volume is faced at the north side with a curtain wall, providing ambient light into the Commons space.

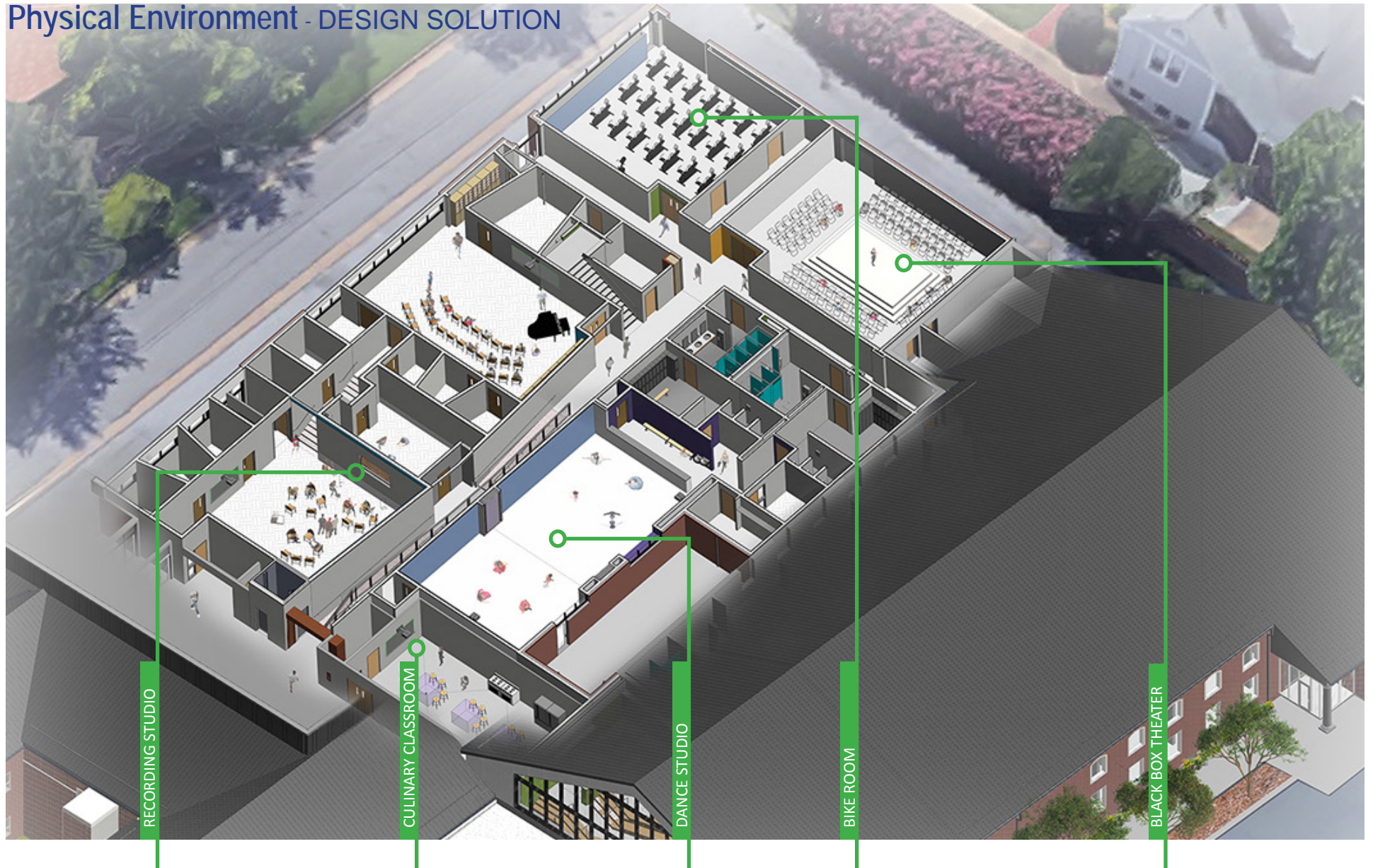
At the exterior wall of the Commons, the indoor/outdoor boundary dissipates when the 40-foot wide glass accordion door is opened to the courtyard. The school's activated core and the adjacent culinary kitchen are available for community use after hours.



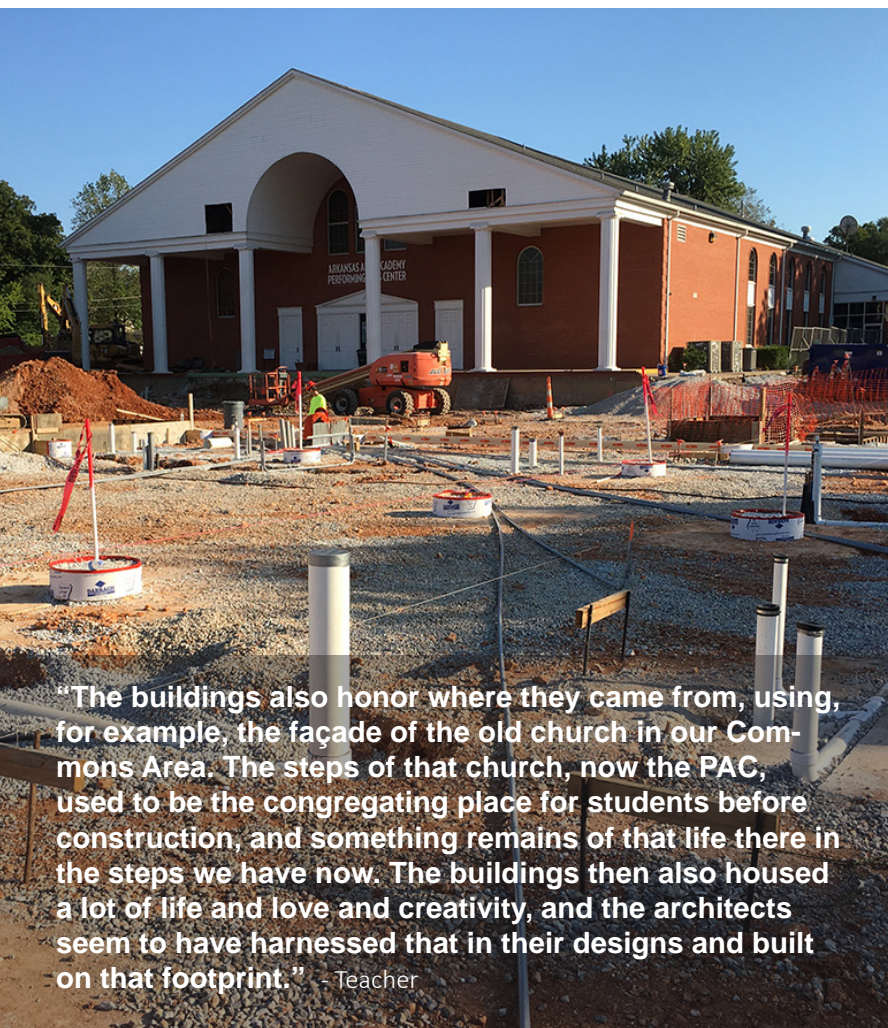
Physical Environment - DESIGN SOLUTION



Physical Environment - DESIGN SOLUTION



Physical Environment



“The buildings also honor where they came from, using, for example, the façade of the old church in our Commons Area. The steps of that church, now the PAC, used to be the congregating place for students before construction, and something remains of that life there in the steps we have now. The buildings then also housed a lot of life and love and creativity, and the architects seem to have harnessed that in their designs and built on that footprint.” - Teacher

*Path To
Enlightenment*



“During construction we were attending classes in trailers that connected to a passage leading to and from remnants of our old high school. Seeing the building gone initially was shocking, but it got me more and more excited to see what would come of the new building” - Graduate

Results of the Process & Project

EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The vision for this project was to take a 200-student school of the arts that was struggling to live up to that title, and re-purpose the existing campus to create a dynamic design that supports an arts-integrated curriculum where students with all types of learning styles can thrive.

The architecture supports the Academy's four pillars of education through designated spaces for music, visual arts, culinary arts, theater, and dance, as well as arts integration in core curriculum.

The goal of the Arkansas Arts Academy is to become a nationally recognized public institution that will draw students of diverse backgrounds from all over Northwest Arkansas, the state, and the region.

Due to the dramatic transformation of both the architectural design and the curriculum offered, Arkansas Arts Academy has seen an increase in enrollment. In 2014 there were 350 students in grades 7-12. Currently there are 638 students enrolled for the fall of 2020, coming from 14 regional school districts.

In addition to increased enrollment, students' ACT Aspire Achievement scores were higher than other schools in the state in every subject area. The graduation rate is above 94%. Over 70% of the 2019 graduating class enrolled in college, which is above the state average of 50%.

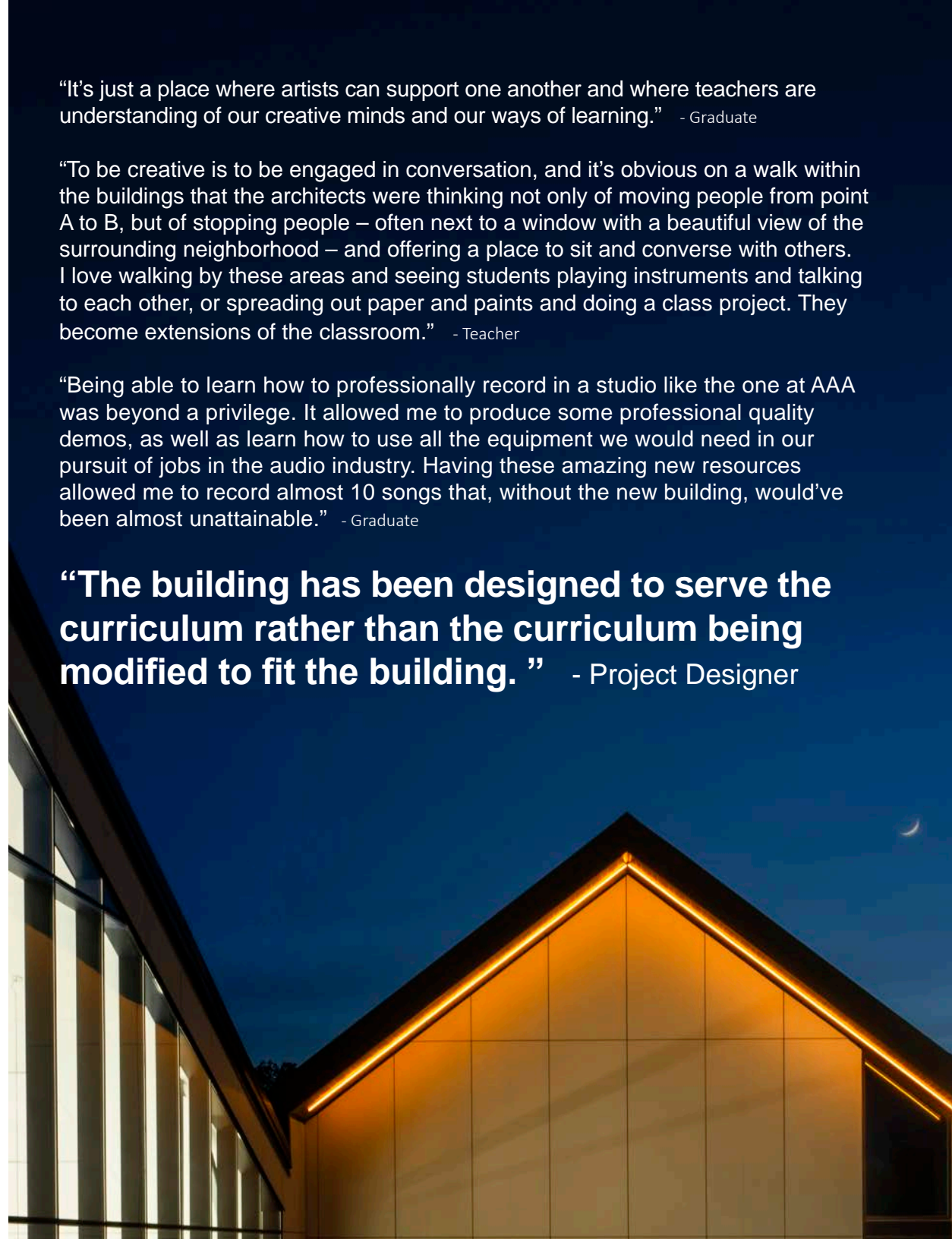
The expansion and renovation allowed for implementation of the desired arts integration curriculum, and students are engaged in a creative process in each subject area on a daily basis.

"It's just a place where artists can support one another and where teachers are understanding of our creative minds and our ways of learning." - Graduate

"To be creative is to be engaged in conversation, and it's obvious on a walk within the buildings that the architects were thinking not only of moving people from point A to B, but of stopping people – often next to a window with a beautiful view of the surrounding neighborhood – and offering a place to sit and converse with others. I love walking by these areas and seeing students playing instruments and talking to each other, or spreading out paper and paints and doing a class project. They become extensions of the classroom." - Teacher

"Being able to learn how to professionally record in a studio like the one at AAA was beyond a privilege. It allowed me to produce some professional quality demos, as well as learn how to use all the equipment we would need in our pursuit of jobs in the audio industry. Having these amazing new resources allowed me to record almost 10 songs that, without the new building, would've been almost unattainable." - Graduate

"The building has been designed to serve the curriculum rather than the curriculum being modified to fit the building." - Project Designer



Results of the Process & Project COMMUNITY GOALS

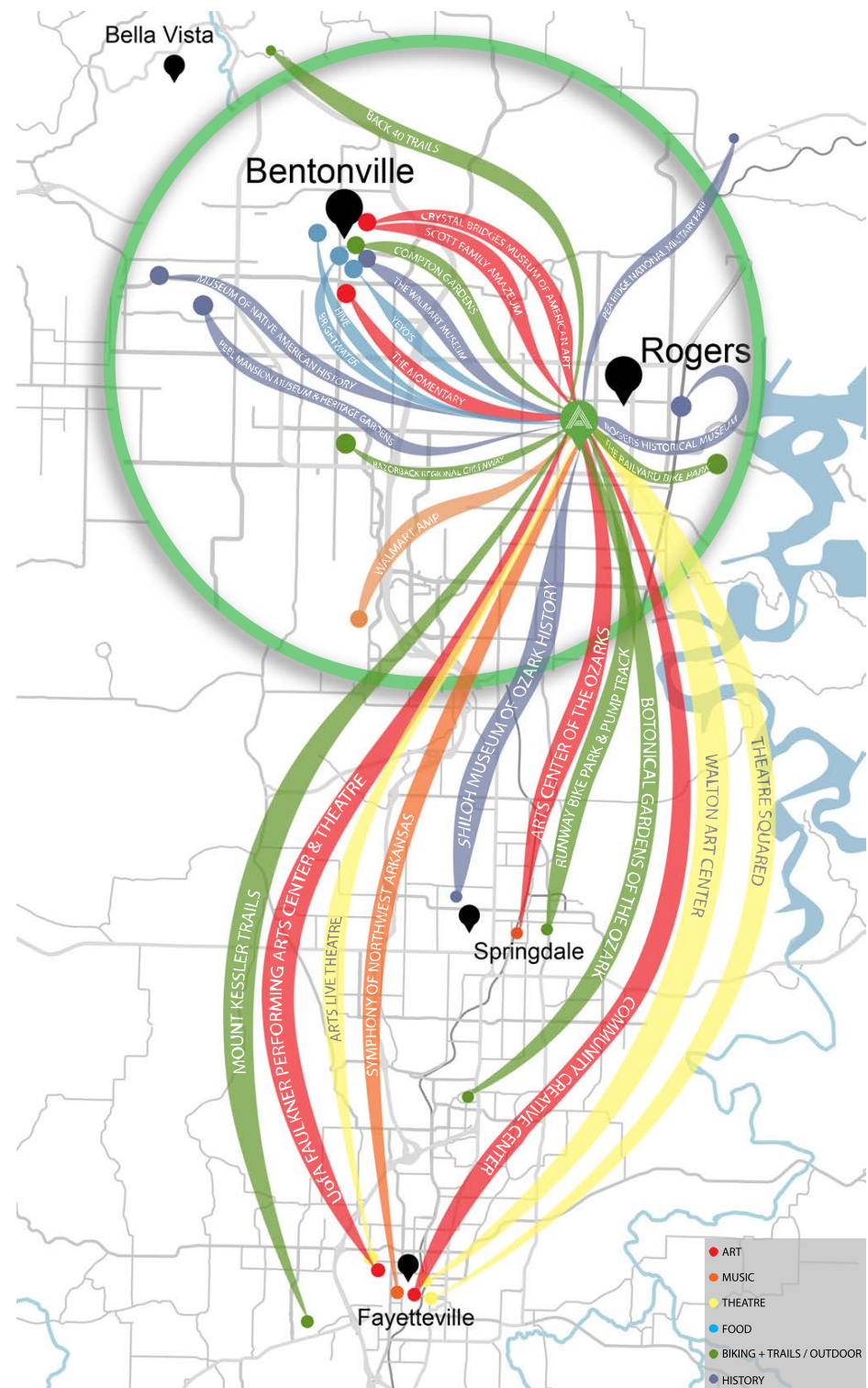
The desire to “take all these threads of our community and weave them together so the kids benefit” was a driving force for the project. The architectural solution, programming, and construction details, combined with the supportive community and intentional curriculum have made this desire a reality.

Students participate in Art on the Bricks, a monthly art walk hosted by Downtown Rogers’ businesses featuring guest artists and musicians from across Northwest Arkansas. The Academy hosted a visual arts show as part of Art on the Bricks in the spring of 2019 in the new Commons space, opening the accordion doors to the outdoor courtyard to welcome the community.

An art exhibit held downtown at the Experimental House during Art on the Bricks was curated by the Creative Writing course and featured extensive arts integration.



Guitar students play at a community event in front of a mural being painted by British artist Rich Simmons, who spoke to parents and students about the creative process.

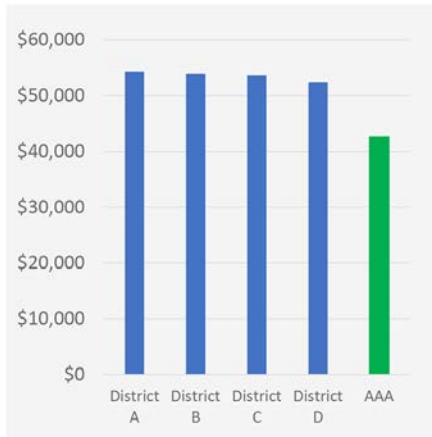


The entire community is a teaching tool.

Results of the Process & Project

UNINTENDED RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Teacher Salary Comparison*



AAA annual salary averages \$10,952 less than area public schools

*based on 5+ years experience with Masters Degree



As a direct result of the innovative design and renovation of the campus, Arkansas Arts Academy is able to attract highly qualified teachers, even though the average salary is less than other area public school districts.

Educators esteem the smaller class sizes and arts integration curriculum, and value the inclusive atmosphere of the Academy as well as the freedom to use more creative instructional methods.



“I love that my classroom lies at the end of a hall on which there are no other classrooms (which makes it somewhat hidden), and it has a door leading directly to the outside. I couldn’t imagine a more perfect space for myself...they gave up office space to make a classroom for me there, knowing how much I like to take my students on walks in the neighborhood and make *that* an extension of my classroom.” - Teacher

Educational Specifications

ARTS-INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

In Arts-Integrated Curriculum, the arts become the approach to teaching and the vehicle for learning. Students meet dual learning objectives when they engage in the creative process to explore connections between an art form and another subject area to gain greater understanding in both.

For example, students meet objectives in theater (characterization, stage composition, action, expression) and in social studies. The experience is mutually reinforcing—creating a dramatization provides an authentic context for students to learn more about the social studies content and as students delve deeper into the social studies content their growing understandings impact their dramatizations. For Arts-Integrated Curriculum to result in deep student understanding in both the art form and the other curriculum area, it requires that teachers engage in professional development to learn about arts standards and how to connect the arts to the curriculum they teach.

The goal of Arkansas Arts Academy is to understand **each term associated with the definition of Arts Integration** and practice it as part of the teaching curriculum.

Arts Integration is an **APPROACH to TEACHING** in which students construct and demonstrate

UNDERSTANDING

through an **ART FORM**.

Students engage in a

CREATIVE PROCESS which

CONNECTS an art form and another subject area and meets **EVOLVING OBJECTIVES** in both.

APPROACH to TEACHING

As an approach to teaching, arts integration relies heavily on the progressive, student-centered end of the continuum, which the Academy has fully embraced. Teachers become facilitators that guide and direct, but it is the student who explores, researches, and collaborates to pilot their education. The building supports this directive by giving teachers spaces that are transparent, adaptable, and connecting. Students engage in a multitude of spaces throughout the building. Learning and facilitating can happen anywhere and at any time.

UNDERSTANDING

Arts integration provides multiple ways for students to make sense of what they learn (construct understanding) and make their learning visible (demonstrate understanding). It goes beyond the initial step of helping students learn and recall information to challenging students to take the information and facts they have learned and do something with them to build deeper understanding. The Academy atmosphere encourages multiple moments each day for students to demonstrate an understanding of what they are learning. It might be a group presentation on the steps in the Commons or creating a piece of art to visually and physically demonstrate theoretical concepts.

ART FORM

Students can construct and demonstrate their understanding in many ways. Traditionally, they are asked to communicate their learning through a report or on a test. However, when they are involved in arts integration, their learning is evident in the products they create, such as the dance, painting, music, or dramatization. Academy teachers plan instruction that engages students in visual, aural, and kinesthetic learning modalities so that students can actively process what they are learning. Spaces are provided in all parts of the building where students have the equipment to create and physical medium to showcase their works.

CREATIVE PROCESS

The heart of arts integration is engagement in the creative process. When Arkansas Arts Academy students engage in the creative process, they produce original work that communicates their ideas, insights, points of view, and feelings. The creative process can be “messy.” It is difficult to predict what will happen, be discovered, or emerge during the process. Students engage in inquiry and experimentation as opposed to following rigid, step-by-step rules. They must create something that is original and of value. They occupy a building that was designed to support this “messy” process.

Educational Specifications

ARTS-INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

CONNECTS

A distinguishing aspect of arts integration is its interdisciplinary connections. Connections are made between a specific art form and a specific curriculum area. For example, a Tech Theater class project fused costume design with anthropology to create fantastical creatures with connections to cultural and tribal communities. The Academy's website features examples of numerous assignments and photographs of the works created in various subjects of study for the community to enjoy. www.artsk12.org

Connections can also be made between a specific art form and a school's socialization concerns. For example, the arts can connect to personal issues such as character education, self-awareness, bullying, collaboration, habits of mind, or multiple intelligences. Students and teachers are able to use a multitude of physical spaces to encourage these connections to happen. The building acts as an organic incubator of ideation and creative connecting.

EVOLVING OBJECTIVES

This final part of the definition underscores two ideas. First, arts integration requires teachers to set objectives in both the art form and the other subject area. The dual objectives are balanced; students are accountable for significant learning in both the art form and the other subject. Second, just as objectives evolve and challenge students to deepen their understandings in science, math, or language arts, objectives in the art form must also evolve if students are to remain challenged. A student does not learn to express ideas through dance in one session. Objectives evolve and unfold over time as students' experience and understandings develop. As students master each objective, they are ready to take on the next, more challenging ones. Teachers monitor student progress and adjust objectives to keep students challenged and interested within a unit or across a year. As students' mastery grows, so do their feelings of self-efficacy—the belief in oneself and one's ability to achieve. The state-of-the-art learning spaces and studios were designed to empower the beginner, the experienced learner, and the instructor. All must develop at their own pace and have a physical space that accommodates that growth.



ARKANSAS
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Arts Integration Project: Plastered Bodies

Students in Mrs. Goolsby's Anatomy and Physiology class studied the human muscular system. The class participated in an arts integration project that introduced students to life-casting sculpture through the art of George Segal, an American artist who used plaster to cast the bodies of his family and friends to create life-size sculptures. Students then casted parts of the body using plaster gauze. The class divided into teams and cast legs, arms, abdomen and head from various students. The plaster casting from the appendages were removed (not actual body parts) then the surfaces were painted to the likeness in the muscles of the human form.





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