

The Flint Cultural Center Academy

FLINT, MICHIGAN



Overall Goals and Outcomes



An urban school prototype designed to change the outcomes of disadvantaged students

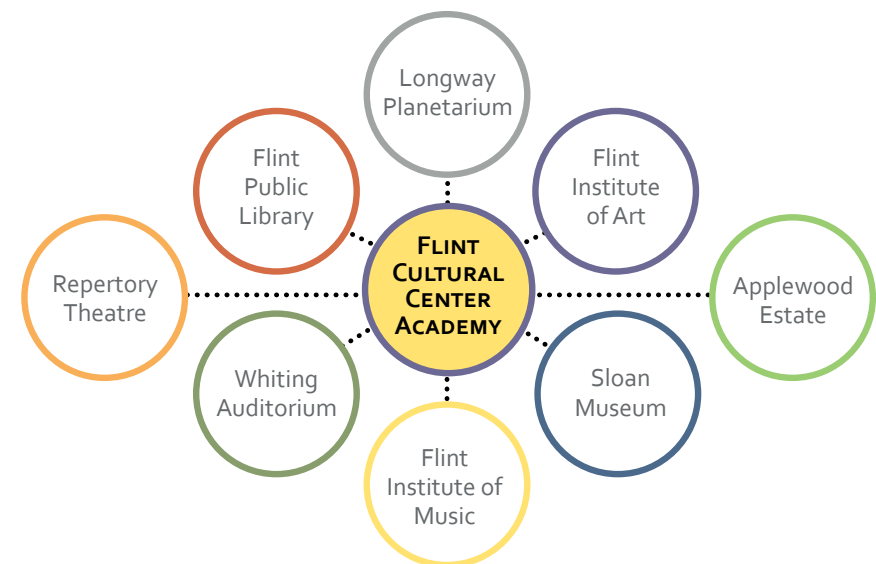
Creating a new Charter School District from scratch can be a daunting challenge for any K-12 school designer. But incorporating a new educational experience that immerses all students, every day, in the Cultural Center of a community created the ultimate challenge for the Architects for the new Flint Cultural Center Academy (FCCA).

Yes, Flint is the city that has struggled for decades in a post manufacturing era, dealing with crime, poverty and decreasing educational outcomes, just like many industrial cities. Add to that the lead contaminated water crisis in Flint and you will understand the environment that led local leaders to strive to create alternative outcomes for these at-risk students.

Understanding that children have multiple types of learning styles that include hands on learning, small group interaction, and teaming to improve their learning outcomes, it became the dream of Ridgway White, CEO of the

Mott Foundation, to develop these new educational techniques in harmony with one of Flint's long standing assets, the Flint Cultural Center. Since the early 1950's, Flint has enjoyed the unique development of a 48 acre campus that encompasses Fine Arts, Music, Science, History, Performing Arts and Drama, and the largest Planetarium in the State of Michigan. The challenge presented was to create a new Charter School that would embrace the immersion of every student, every day into the surrounding campus.

The new Flint Cultural Center Academy is the result of years of dreaming and planning for a future for Flint Area kids that will be measurably more successful for each and every student.



■ Creating the Vision

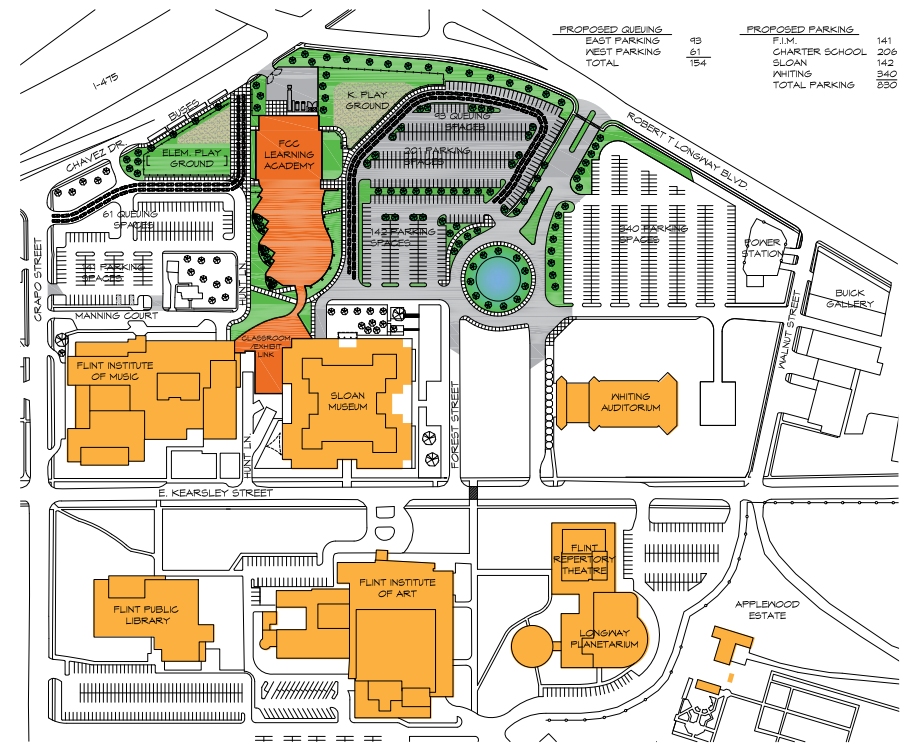
The Architects were challenged to help create a brand new charter school district within the Flint Cultural Center to house 650, K-8 students.

The intention was to use the school as an urban school prototype, demonstrating that no matter how challenging one's living environment may be, all students have the ability to expand their learning capabilities through hands on, project based learning that is fully immersed in the cultural arts of the community.

Working with an educational consultant, the Architects of Record helped develop the educational program specifications and establish the goals required for the Charter School application. All of this was accomplished without the presence of a Board of Education, a superintendent, nor a single employee of the soon to be created school district.

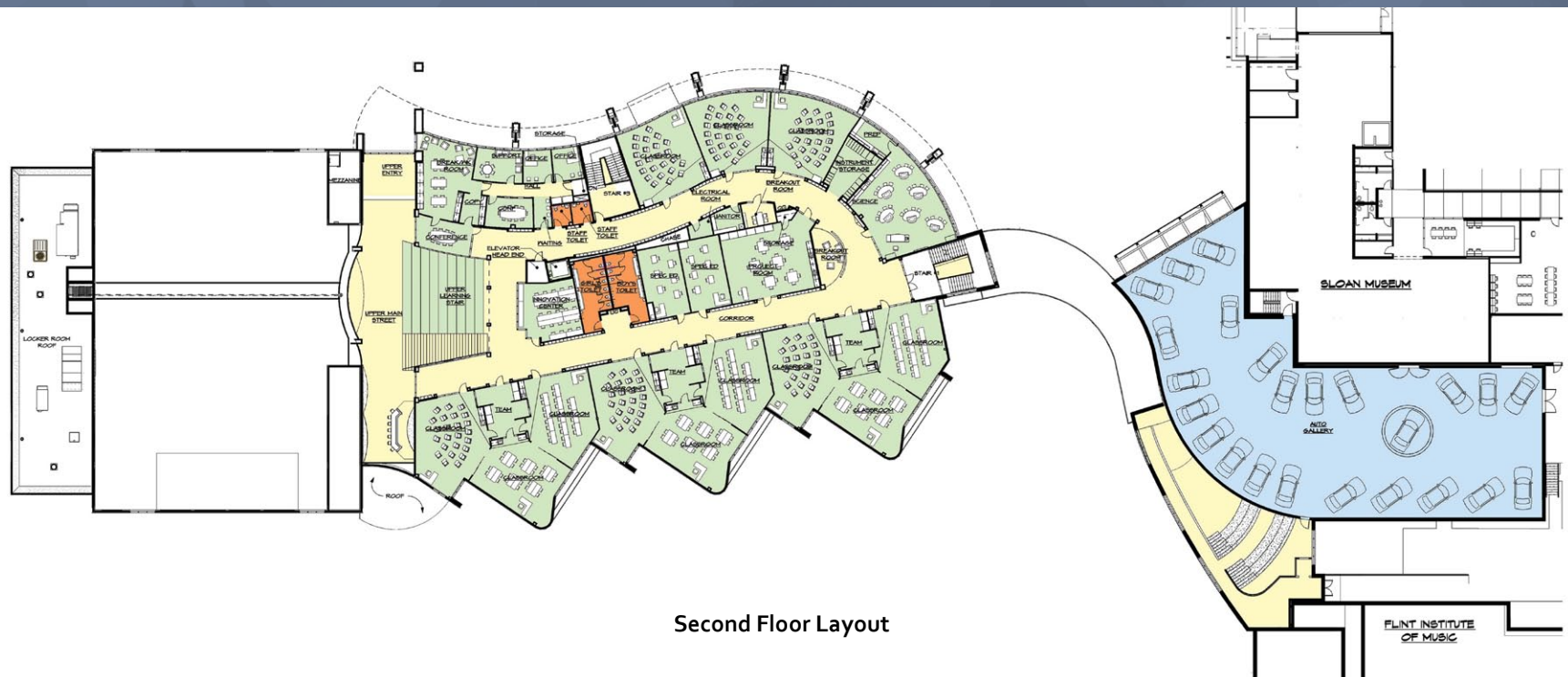
The Architects then assembled a complete team of consultants to address every element of the required built environment. Working with the funder, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Flint Cultural Center Corporation, the Architects developed multiple site design options in and around the Flint Cultural Center to help determine the best opportunities for students to navigate the two block campus in the most efficient manner, while minimizing impact on the day to day operations of the cultural facilities.

Finally, two days before Christmas in 2017, the funder approved a conceptual design with a construction budget of \$20 Million to construct a 78,000 SF, two-story charter school called the Flint Cultural Center Academy.



The Architects were challenged to help create a brand new charter school district within the Flint Cultural Center to house 650, K-8 students.





■ Project Scope

Owner:
Flint Cultural Center Corporation

Location:
Flint, Michigan

Grade:
K-8

Student Capacity:
650 Students

Building Area:
78,000 SF

Site Area:
48 Acres - Cultural Center Campus

Construction Cost:
\$20 Million

Occupancy Date:
Fall 2019



The Flint Cultural Center Academy and the Flint Community

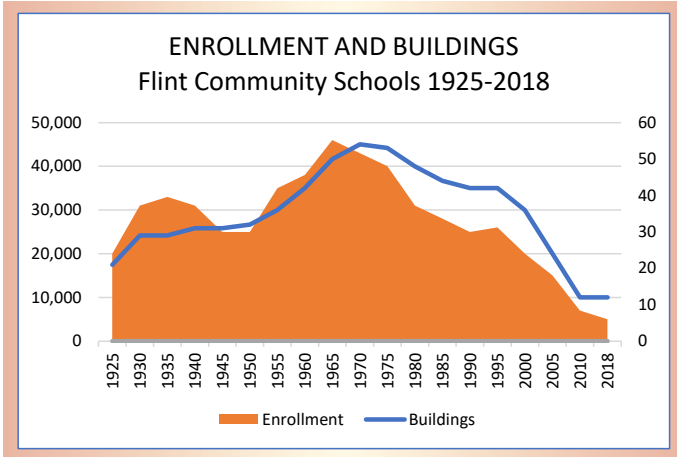
The City of Flint grew into prominence as the automotive industry grew from its infancy in the early 1900's and peaked with the industry in the mid 1970's. At its peak, Flint/Genesee County had the highest per capita income in the country and the City of Flint school district had more than 36,000 students. Community Education was created in Flint and school districts from all around the country came to Flint to see the astounding success of the district and adopted many of their Community Education concepts.

Fifty years later, much has changed. With the decline of automotive manufacturing in the US, Flint was hit hard with downsizing, suburban flight, forced integration of schools and a crumbling financial base. The enrollment for many school districts decreased, but Flint's inability to meet basic learning standards opened the doors for many new charter schools to be created

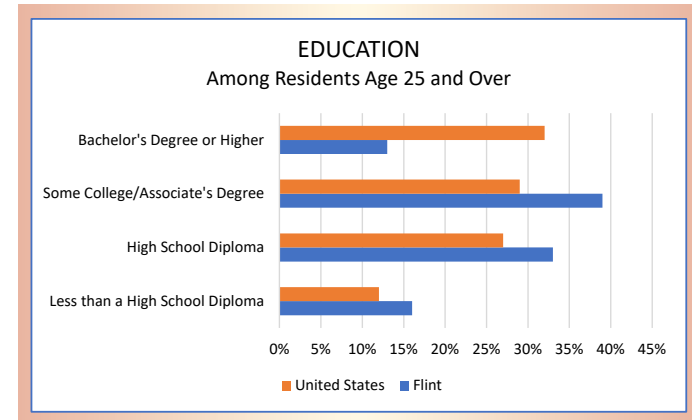
in Flint and for parents to choose open enrollment in neighboring school districts, which has depleted the Flint Schools population to less than 4,000 students, while graduating only 223 students in 2020.

Unfortunately, most of the charter schools are also struggling to meet even the most basic educational standards set by the State, with several performing in the lowest 20% of the State of Michigan.

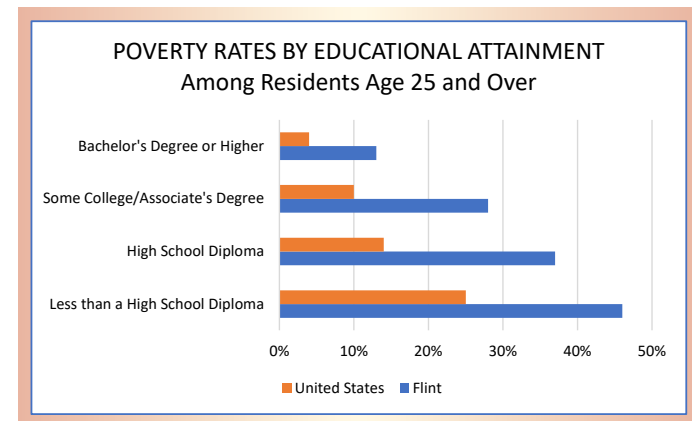
This is the educational environment that has spurred the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to put modern educational theories to the test and create a new charter school that immerses students into the arts and sciences of Flint's premier asset, the Flint Cultural Center.



Source: Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, 2019, Focus on Flint, Issue 1



Source: Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, 2019, Focus on Flint, Issue 1



Source: Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, 2019, Focus on Flint, Issue 1

Stakeholders

The most critical stakeholder in the development of the new Flint Cultural Center Academy is the visioner and funder, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. Their CEO has been studying educational concepts from around the country and at home in Flint, Michigan, trying to find a way to reach disadvantaged students in urban areas with a program that excites them to learning, that opens their eyes to a world that they have never known and gives them a vision of education as a tool that will propel them to achieve beyond the minimums of life and discover their hidden talents and potential.

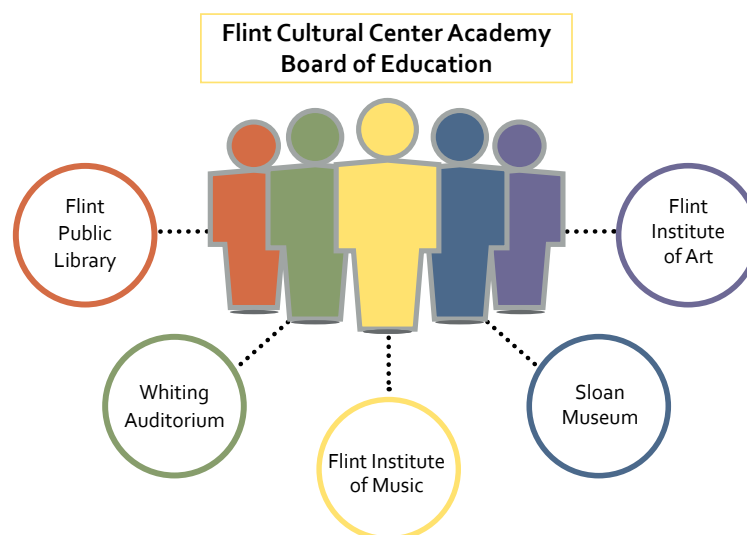


But there are other critical stakeholders in the process. Moving through the charter school authorization process, the leaders of the major Cultural Center facilities were named to the five-person Board of Education. Leaders of the Sloan Museum of Discovery, the Flint Institute of Art, The Flint Institute of Music, the Whiting Auditorium, and the Flint Public Library all became the district's first Board of Education. It was critical that the major players within the Cultural Center buy into the concept of student immersion into their programs and that they become responsible for the School's operational success.

Developing an education curriculum and strategy around five strong minded independent entities within the Cultural Center was not an easy feat.



Flint Cultural Center Campus



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Challenge #1 - Locate Site to Optimize Student Access to Cultural Center Facilities

Challenge

Locating a school and its accessory site elements is always a bit of a challenge. The site challenges for the new Flint Cultural Center Academy were of a much greater proportion. The Cultural Center encompasses six major Cultural community elements including a music center, an art center, a performance center, a planetarium/youth theater facility, a history and automotive museum, and a public library.

The goal of the new charter school was to find a location as central as possible to make daily student access as approachable as possible in both warm, sunny weather as well as during the harsh winter weather.

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The Architects developed a total of 6 different site locations for the Cultural Center entities to examine as we discussed the pros and cons of each. The problem was that, other than the two residential sites, the existing boundaries of the Cultural Center were currently being used for Cultural buildings and parking lots, and parking spaces were at a premium when large events occurred in the Cultural Center. Each entity was loath to give up any of their designated areas to satisfy the site needs for the School no matter how important the school was to the community and the Cultural Center.

Add to this scenario a strong desire by the Cultural Center to eventually create a new vehicle access to the Cultural Center and relieve traffic from the current two-lane city street that runs through the heart of the Cultural Center.

Solution

Ultimately, the Architect was able to demonstrate that the new two-story school could be located behind the Flint Institute of Music and the Sloan Museum of Discovery and provide even more parking for events than what they had originally started with.

The new design also created the new vehicle entry from Robert T. Longway Boulevard to the north, past the new school, and into the heart of the Cultural Center. The creative siting of the school allowed a new entry for the Cultural Center, increased available parking, created visual exposure for the school from Longway Boulevard and allowed the school to connect directly to the Flint Institute of Music and the Sloan Museum of Discovery so students could use those facilities without ever going outside.

The site also solved a lot of very critical problems which are inherent for most charter schools that do not have a bus system. That is the problem of parent pick-up and drop-off of students. There can be hundreds of cars all arriving at the same time and a carefully arranged process must be included in the design to address this potentially dangerous condition. The new site layout provided plenty of queuing spaces for cars, with a second future queue area designed on the opposite side of the building.

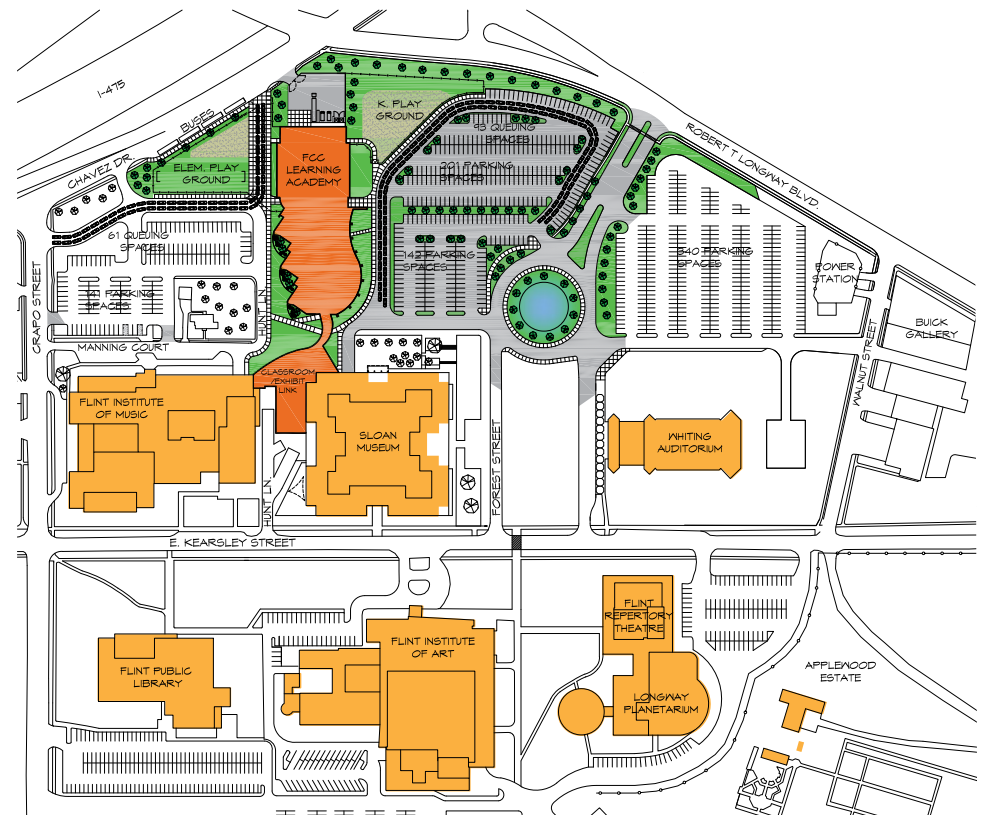
- New vehicle entry from Robert T. Longway Blvd.
- Visual exposure from Robert. T. Longway Blvd.
- Over a hundred queuing spaces for parent drop-off
- More parking for Cultural Center events

PROPOSED QUEUING

East Parking	93
West parking	61
Total Queuing	154

PROPOSED PARKING

FIM	141
Charter School	206
Sloan	142
Whiting	340
Total Parking	550



■ Challenge #2 - Design without any Limitations or Restrictions

Challenge

Every new educational facility has plenty of challenges: financial, conflicting personalities, physical site limitations, and inflexible schedules to name a few. Developing a new school prior to defining a Board of Education, a superintendent, educators, or even an operations manager while having the funding handed over without a vote from the public, may seem like a dream come true for a designer. However, designing without limits or restrictions can be a very real challenge for the Architect. Working with the CEO of the Mott Foundation and an educational consultant to make every decision required, with the success of the facility resting squarely on the shoulders of only a few, can be very daunting. There are no educational policies, there is no curriculum, there is no district history, there is no defined parent group or even previous district failures to learn from.

Solution

It would take an unwavering dedication to strict educational principles by the Visioners, years of educational teaching and administrative experience for an educational consultant to lead the chartering process, and it would take an Architect with decades of experience designing conventional schools, learning from past successes and failures, to create an exciting new school district; a school district with an exciting new school facility that can be flexible enough to meet the needs of such a variety of students as a home base for their daily journeys into the world of Arts and Sciences.



Challenge #3 - Fast Track Schedule

Challenge

From the moment the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation approved the conceptual design of the new charter school, the team knew that time was going to be a major player in every aspect of the project. The Architect and their consultants had only 5 months to

take the one line floor plans and site plan from concept to final construction drawings. This extremely aggressive schedule was needed to allow for 30 days of bidding and award, leaving just 13 months for the general contractor to complete the 78,000 SF school.

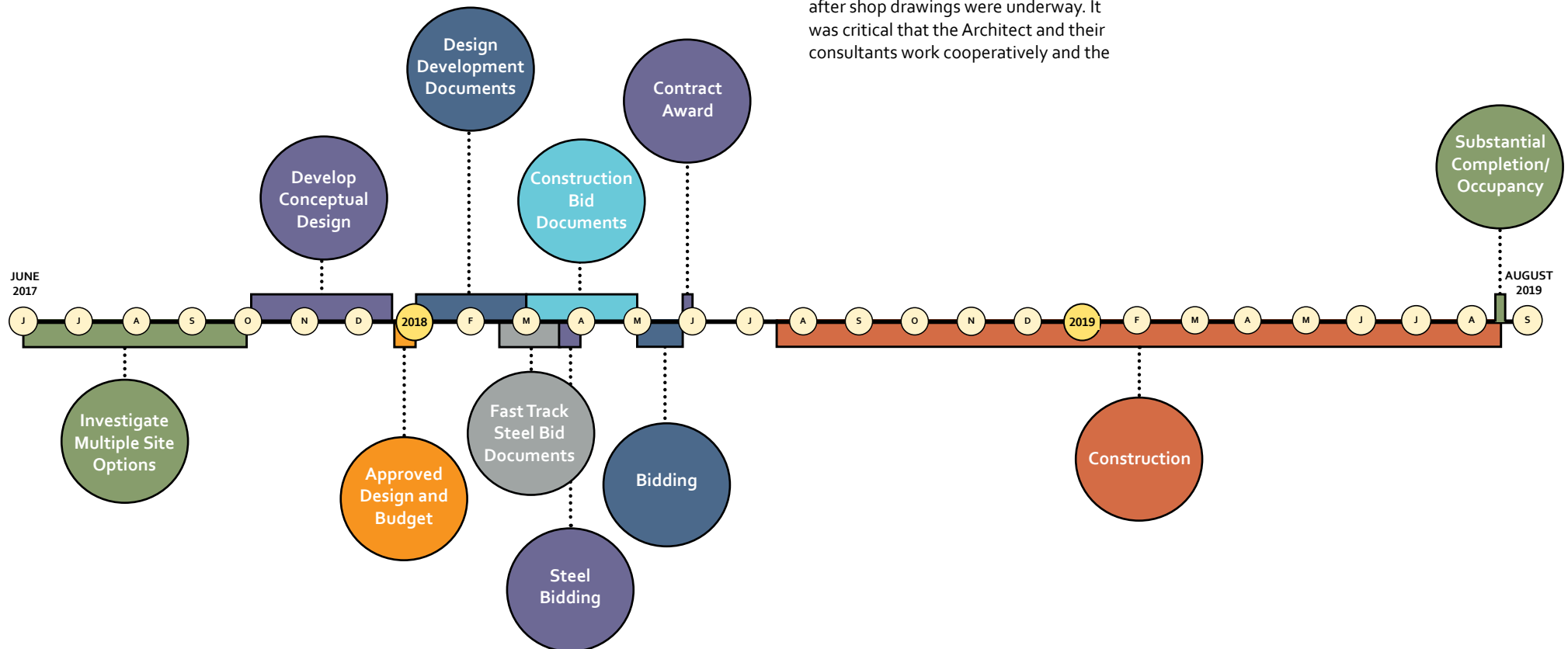
Solution

The tight time frame dictated a steel frame building (with minimal masonry) and stud wall and abuse resistant gypsum to speed up the construction process. Insulated metal panels were the predominant exterior materials along with blue tinted glazing. This allowed early access by trades to begin their work without waiting for load bearing walls and floors to be constructed.

The structural steel was fast tracked a month earlier with the successful steel bidder assigned to the successful general contractor after shop drawings were underway. It was critical that the Architect and their consultants work cooperatively and the

use of Revit® greatly improved efficiencies and coordination of each discipline. It was even more critical that the Architect work closely with the general contractor to make decisions quickly and look for opportunities to streamline the construction process.

The school opened as scheduled in the middle of August 2019 with excited staff, students and parents all experiencing this new educational environment for the first time, together.



Available Assets

Traditional Educational Assets such as experienced educators and administrators, supportive parents and strong community identity were not present to aid in the design of the new charter school. These all came much later during the inception process.

However, the new charter school has plenty of very unusual Educational Assets. The emphasis of the new school is the access that students will have on a daily basis to all the educational opportunities within the Flint Cultural Center.

The assets available to the FCC Academy students are envisioned to be a difference maker in these young children. If a child is excited to go to school each day and has the opportunity to use their hands and feet and mind as a part of their learning day, they will be successful because they want to be there.

Wouldn't any of us be excited for a chance to learn this way every day?

Flint Institute of Music



There is no music room in the school. Students will access the Flint Institute of Music directly without going outside. The Flint Institute of Music has been recognized as one of the premier music and dance instructional programs in the Country. Students will have access to band, orchestra, choir, and dance starting at the age of 5 years old.

Sloan Museum of Discovery



The Sloan Museum of Discovery has been providing automotive and science educational opportunities for students from all over the State of Michigan for decades, but now FCC Academy students will use the facilities to support their learning curriculum while experiencing the museum on a daily basis. The new school is located to provide direct access to these opportunities without ever going outside.

Whiting Auditorium



The Whiting Auditorium is the home of the Flint Symphony and is the venue for countless stage productions, musicals and local dance recitals. The Whiting will become a performing arts venue for the school as well as the REP, which is a youth/community players theater program housed adjacent to the planetarium. Students will access the REP (the Flint Repertory Theatre) for drama and musical instruction and public performances.

Longway Planetarium



Longway Planetarium, the largest planetarium in Michigan, is a 130 seat, state-of-the-art planetarium and science center that will excite these young learners and encourage them to explore the galaxy of opportunities that science has to offer.

Flint Institute of Art



The Flint Institute of Art is a jewel within the Cultural Center which has nationally claimed collections highlighting long established artists and sculptors, as well as the newest creations of the modern world. There are no art rooms at the FCC Academy, but students will access the glorious experience of a thousand years of artists willing to share their perspective with these young minds.

Flint Public Library



The new charter school has no Library. The students will access critical information and resources through technology, but they will all travel across the street to the Flint Public Library for access to books and specialized programs using maker space and other contemporary programs to get students engaged in active learning.

Value to the Community

Typical of most charter school projects, the FCC Academy did not have the benefit of a “community based” workshop to help define the goals of parents and students alike because charter schools do not have a specific community to serve.

But the Academy was the recipient of decades of community input about education that was being provided in the Flint area. Parents voted with their feet by moving to suburban school districts who had substantially more success educating their students. They told us that low graduation rates were not acceptable by transporting their students to neighboring school districts who had open enrollment. Parents vehemently said to the Flint Community that high absentee rates and low test scores were not acceptable by moving their children into charter schools who promised the changes that parents wanted.

The Flint Area knew a lot about what wasn’t working and what was not acceptable. With a few exceptions, however, even the new charter schools did not know how to change outcomes for these at-risk children.

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation has been a major financial supporter of local school districts, trying to invoke a difference in these kids lives. It was the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation back in the 1970’s who financed and spear-headed the immensely successful Community Education Program in schools that spread throughout the country, but was started right here in Flint, Michigan.

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation used their decades of successes and failures to determine that multiple means of learning and teaching were necessary to help all children learn and achieve to their abilities.

Students at the new FCC Academy will spend at least one hour per day within the surrounding Cultural Center facilities for hands-on learning. They use the extended school year to maximize information retention and offer enrichment programs before and after school. But still, this is a gamble. It is a gamble based upon decades of negative input from parents and students in the community. It is a gamble based on years of research into successful educational programs around the country who have learned to engage inner city, disadvantaged students.

This new charter school is meant to serve as an example, a prototype for other school districts to see how building a complete student, exposed to all facets of learning, can change educational outcomes for all students. A city cannot be successful if it has faulty schools. Flint is a community holding its breath in hopes that perhaps this is the key for turning around their young kids lives after five decades of decline.

STRUGGLE WITH OUTCOMES

Flint Area Schools

Third Grade Reading Proficiency:	19%
Four-Year High School Graduates:	67%
SAT College/Career Readiness:	4%
Chronic Absence Rate:	43%

Source: Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, 2019, Focus on Flint, Issue 1

What is the value of the FCC Academy to the Flint Community?

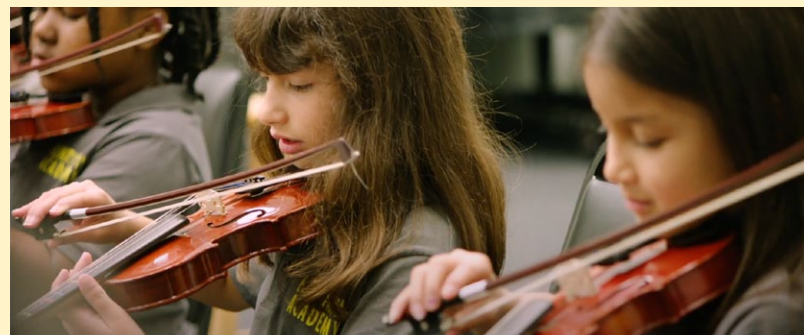


PHOTO: Microsoft Education



PHOTO: Microsoft Education

It is Everything.



PHOTO: Microsoft Education

FLINT CULTURAL CENTER

2018 Visitor Information

Total Visitors:	646,000
Field Trips by Flint Community School Children:	147
Programs Brought to the Classroom:	185

Source: Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, 2019, Focus on Flint, Issue 1

Vision and Goals



PHOTO: Jason Keen

The Educational vision and goals for the new FCC Academy were established by the leadership of the Mott Foundation who funded and spearheaded this unique Charter School. The educational vision was the creation of a school where students from a diverse mix of environments would be exposed to multiple learning styles while immersed into a culturally rich environment that encourages hands on learning, team building, sharing of ideas, stimulation of all portions of the brain and just plain fun, all provided in an environment that is exciting and safe.

This would be a school where all students would excel because each day they would experience success and each day their voice would be heard.

While a vision of fun filled success through doing, rather than quietly listening, may seem idealistic, the reality can be achieved if goals can be measured and achieved.

The goal of the New FCC Academy is to provide students in the Flint area an educational experience that lifts them substantially above the achievements of their peers in a measurable manner.

“Through an average of 90 minutes of student learning with the FCC institutions, our goal is to build something that inspires our learners. We look to challenge the status quo – to take the parts of traditional education that are working and build on them to create something truly revolutionary.”

~ FCC Academy Website



PHOTO: Microsoft Education

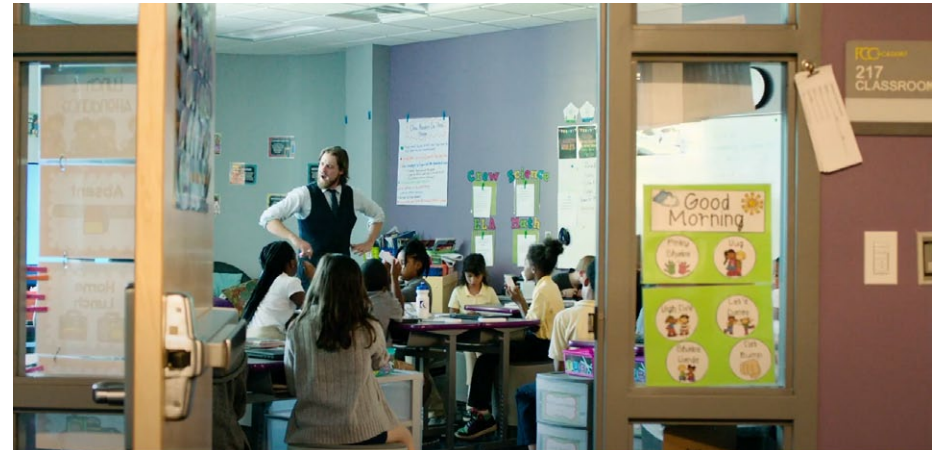


PHOTO: Microsoft Education



PHOTO: Microsoft Education

Environment Supports the Curriculum

Traditional schools have to look within the walls of the school to determine how well the school facility supports the educational curriculum. At FCC Academy the educational environment is a 48-acre Cultural Center campus that has focused on child education for seven decades. The new school structure is a home base and a fully equipped supplement to a community wide educational environment.

With state-of-the-art technology within every learning space, students and teachers have access to every tool within the modern educational tool belt. Since all teachers are hired new to the school, they will enter with a strong proficiency in how to make technology the most effective tool possible.

Large project labs and pneumatically adjustable science lab islands provide alternative learning stations for all ages when the weather requires Cultural Center Learning programs to come to the school.

The Flint Cultural Center Academy was chosen to be 1 of only 3 Microsoft Flagship's in the entire country which exalts the excellent learning spaces provided in the new school and uses Microsoft technology to substantially raise the bar of the technical learning and teaching processes.

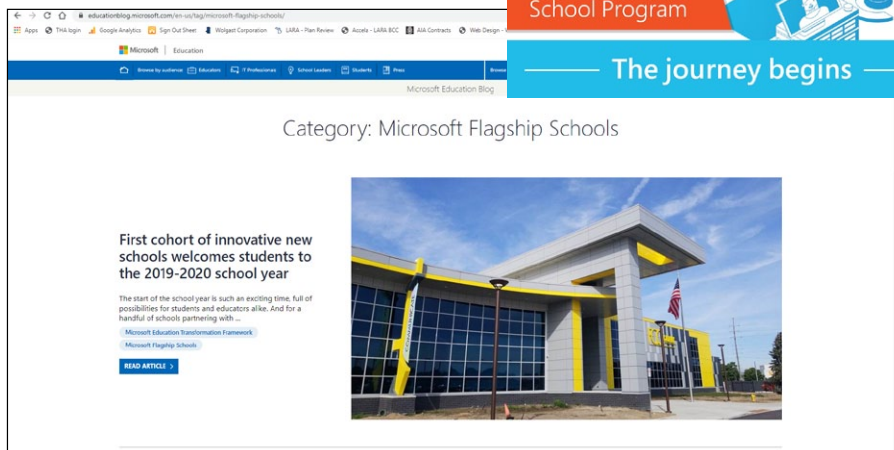


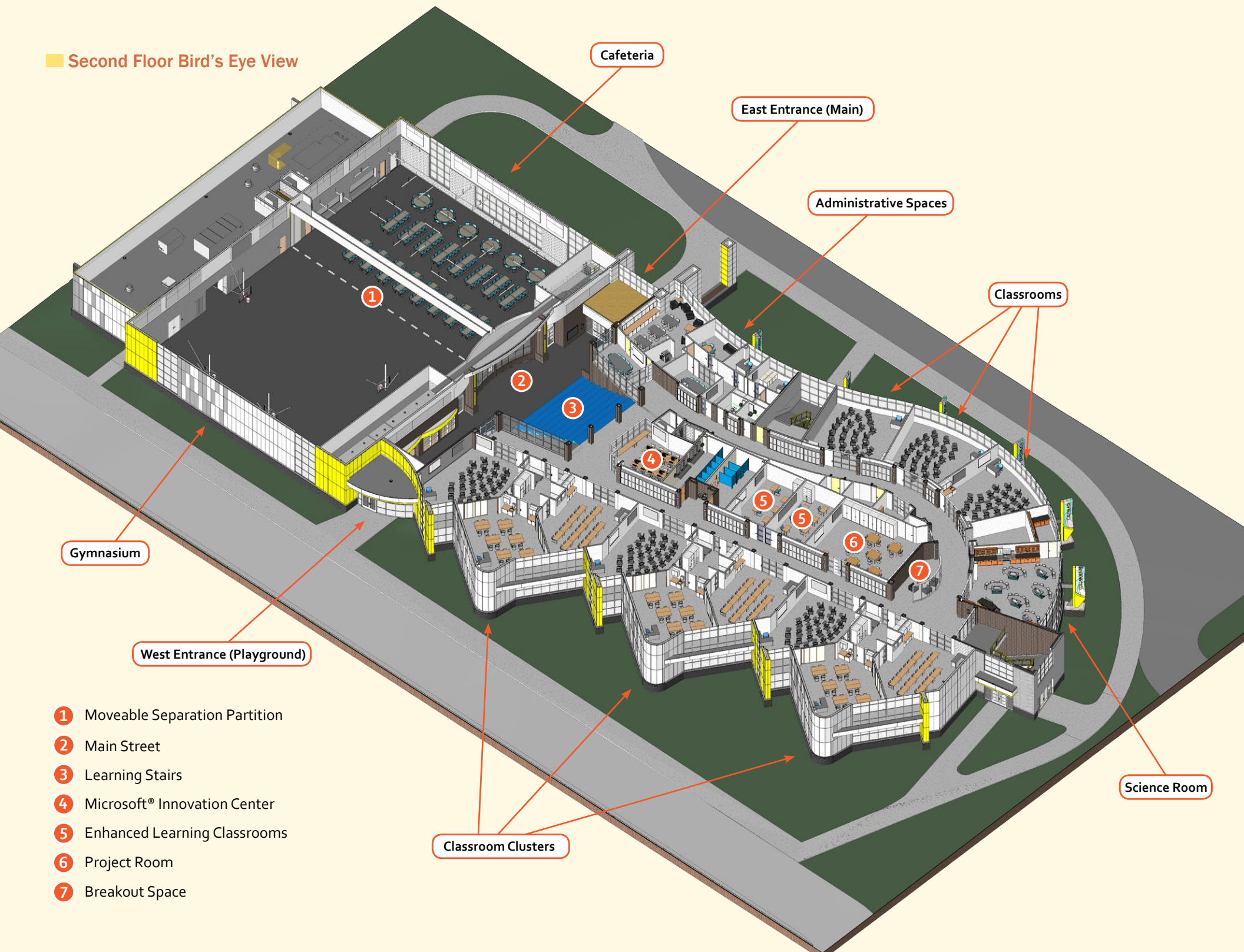
PHOTO: Jason Keen



PHOTO: Microsoft Education

- **Daily Immersion in the Cultural Arts of the Community**
- **1 of 3 US Microsoft Flagship Schools**
- **Flexible Teaching and Learning Environment**

■ Second Floor Bird's Eye View



Cafeteria

East Entrance (Main)

Administrative Spaces

Classrooms

2

3

1

4

5

5

6

7

Gymnasium

West Entrance (Playground)

1 Moveable Separation Partition

2 Main Street

3 Learning Stairs

4 Microsoft® Innovation Center

5 Enhanced Learning Classrooms

6 Project Room

7 Breakout Space

Classroom Clusters

Science Room

Environment Supports a Variety of Learning and Teaching Styles

Classroom Clusters

Grade levels 1-7 are constructed in three classroom clusters which are open to each other with moveable walls to provide as much separation as the day demands. Teachers can team teach in two classrooms while one remains fixed for more structured students or it can be open to all three classrooms with students moving from one learning station to another. Of course, all three classrooms can be separated from one another as the curriculum, the students or even the teachers require. The clusters are totally flexible and have good sound separation when separation is needed.

Cluster Team Rooms

Each cluster has a central team room which is accessible from each independent classroom. The team room is where classroom supplies and curriculum supplies are stored, but also houses conferencing furniture. Team rooms can be used by students to work on project based learning modules so they can share their ideas more easily and learn from one another. Teachers can use the team room after hours to plan curriculum and coordinate team teaching opportunities. Team rooms will also be a place where teaching assistants or parent volunteers will work with students who need more personal attention.

Classroom Cluster Layout

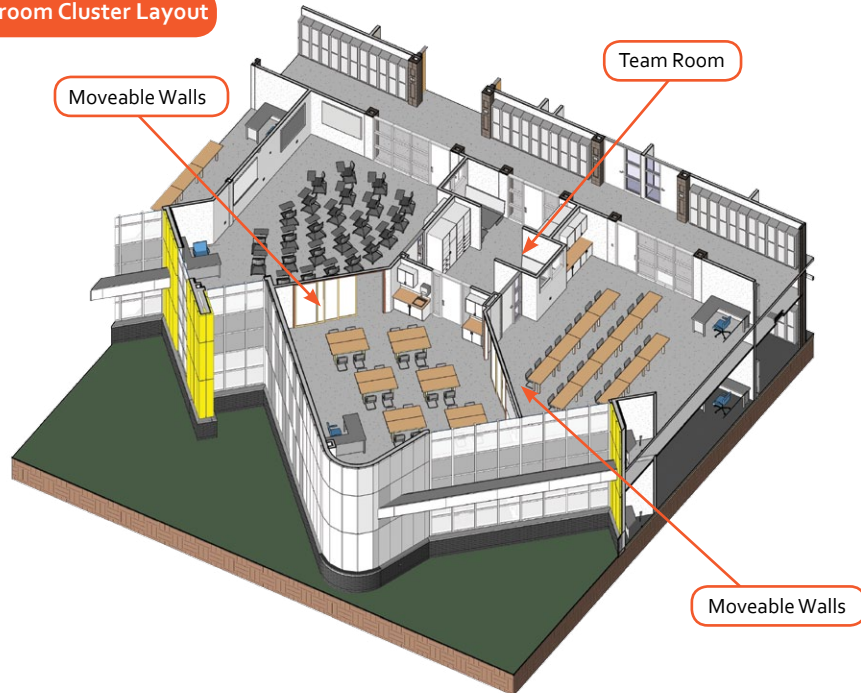


PHOTO: Jason Keen



PHOTO: Jason Keen

Classroom Furniture

Within each classroom, students will have the assigned “traditional” seats, but there are also multiple soft seating and learning nooks that will allow students who need to be more mobile to relocate and slouch, or lay down or rock while paying attention to the presented materials.

Break Out Rooms

There are multiple break out rooms located throughout the classroom corridors to provide space for students from multiple grade levels to come together for team building and hands on projects. These break out rooms are glass enclosed areas with flexible, comfortable furniture to address all types of teaming capabilities. Students will carry two-way communication pucks that will allow teachers the ability to remotely listen to the conversation (monitoring) as well as for all students to reach teachers for advice.

Project Rooms

There is a very large project room on each floor that will allow teachers to lead project based learning with large lab tables and walls of storage cabinets that house curriculum building elements such as Legos, claymation, erector sets, etc. Projects can be set up for different grade levels to use and explore at their own level.

Learning Stair

Housed in the Main Street area is a learning stair that provides open stairs to the second floor and also provides a 22 foot wide, stepped auditorium seating spaces for large student gatherings. Students can sit on ledges or recline on the broad treads for social gatherings. Phone charging and internet access are available to the students and major audio and video equipment is installed for large group instruction and presentation.



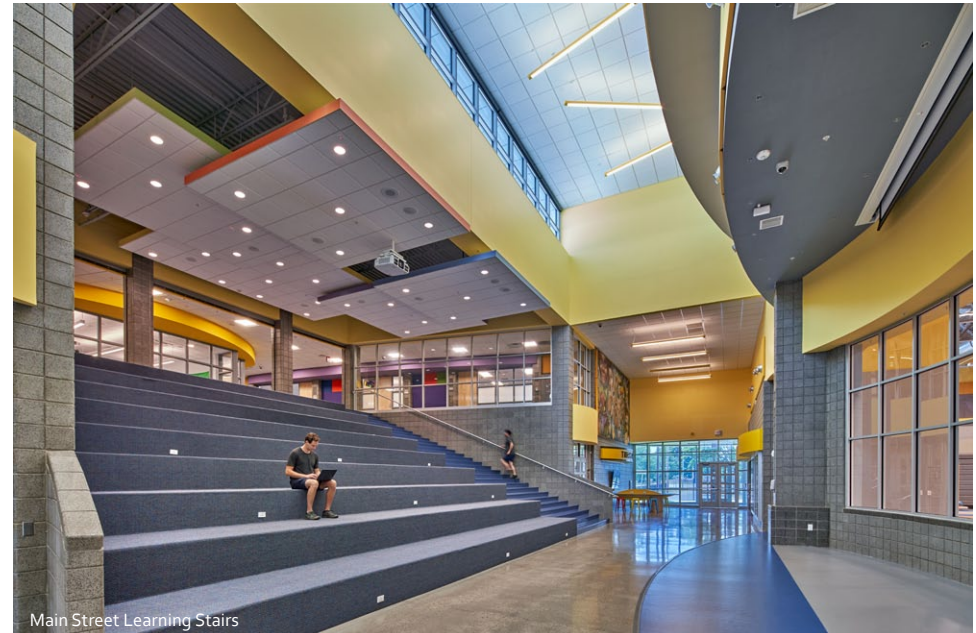
Project Room

PHOTO: Jason Keen



Break Out Room

PHOTO: Jason Keen



Main Street Learning Stairs

PHOTO: Jason Keen

Environment is Adaptable and Flexible

Cluster Classrooms

Grade levels 1-7 have all three grade level classrooms arranged in a cluster with sliding glass doors to provide as much or as little shared space as desired. This flexibility of classroom arrangements allows for team teaching between two or even all three instructors as desired or the creation of more traditionally enclosed rooms depending on students, teachers or the curriculum's need.

Team Rooms

Team rooms have been constructed and furnished for a variety of shared users including students, staff, volunteers and special services professionals. Team rooms also allow access to each of the three rooms in the cluster so students don't have to pass through other classrooms to gain access to the corridors.

Project Rooms

The project rooms are large, open rooms with large lab tables that can be moved to the side to provide open floor area for robotics or moved together to allow creation of large models. The project room is not an assigned classroom but provides flexibility for Cultural Center facility instructors to come to the Academy to teach their lessons if weather conditions prevent students from traveling to the Cultural facilities.

Innovation Center

The Innovation Center is designed as a break-out, drop-in technology lab. With traditional technology labs being replaced with technology in every classroom, the Innovation Center is a lab with very specialized computer programs that support CAD, modeling, animation, school video production and other unique learning opportunities.



PHOTO: Microsoft Education



PHOTO: Jason Keen



PHOTO: Jason Keen

Physical Attributes of the Environment

The goal of the school is to house an array of State of the Art educational spaces that excite the students and staff each day to envision, to create, to explore and to learn about a world they never knew existed. The following built elements are meant to do just that.

Excitement Through Drama

For students, parents and staff alike, the drama starts with a tall 40 foot cantilevered entrance canopy that sets atop a sleek, two story building of glass and metal panels that leave behind the traditional models of brick and block and introduces the community to a 21st century, urban expression.

The drama continues down Main Street where students can see the cafeteria and gym through tall glass windows and experience the giant-sized Learning Stairs that draws their eyes to the second floor and the glass enclosed Innovation Center. This daily first impression is meant to inspire and excite everyone who enters.



PHOTO: Jason Keen

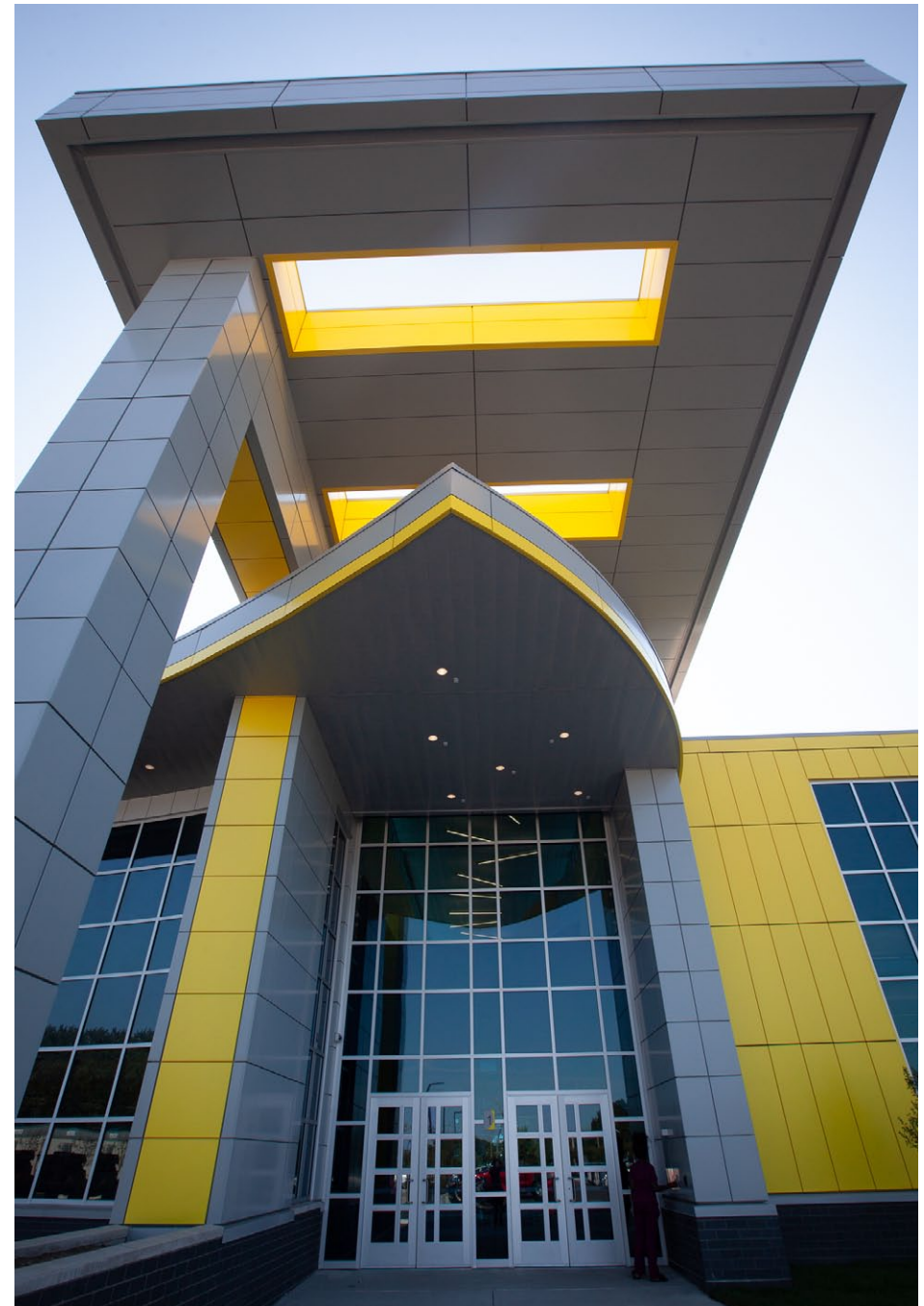


PHOTO: Rick Smith

Excitement through Colors

From the multiple floor patterns of the gym and cafeteria spaces to the classroom cluster corridor bulkheads, vibrant color is everywhere. Each grade level has their own color theme and public spaces provide their own colors that usher visitors from one space to another. Yet once in the learning spaces, colors become more subdued and respectful of the environment needed for concentration.



PHOTO: Jason Keen



PHOTO: Jason Keen

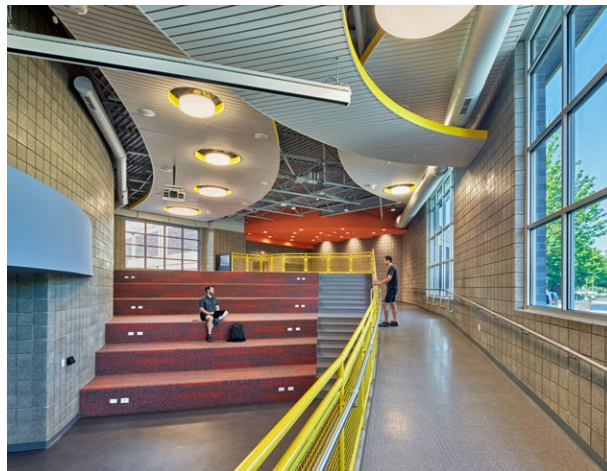


PHOTO: Jason Keen



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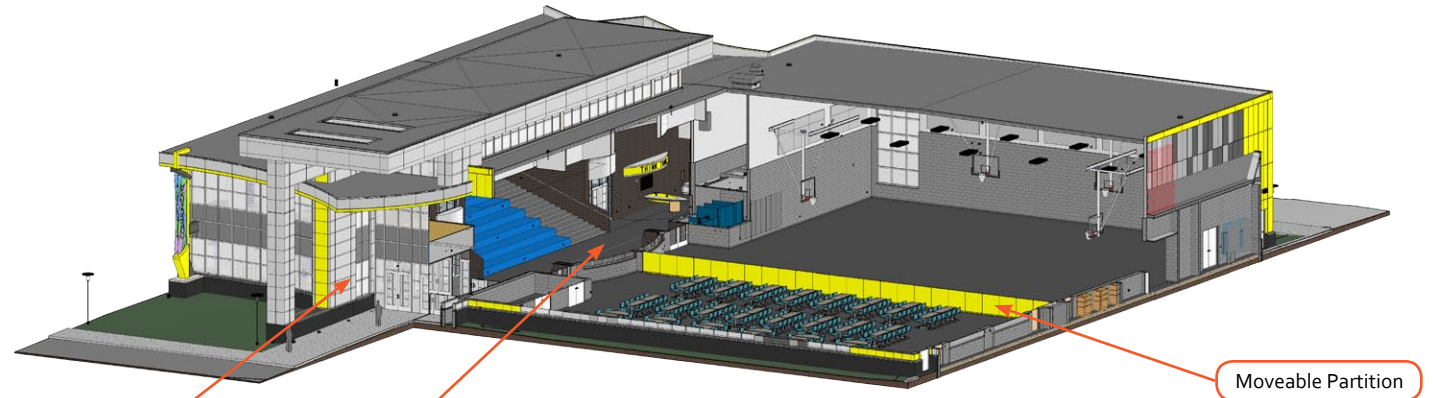
PHOTO: Jason Keen

Space Arrangement – Circulation

An often overlooked, but critical planning concept, is the ease of way finding in a 78,000 SF school. One of the attributes of the FCC Academy is that, upon entering, the Main Street is a major organizational element. All of the “public” spaces are accessible from Main Street with large glass areas looking into the gym and into the cafeteria and the main office. The central feature of Main Street is the two story Learning Stair which is open and provides views to both the 1st floor and second floor classroom corridors.

So, upon entering Main Street, the school plan concept is visible and understandable.

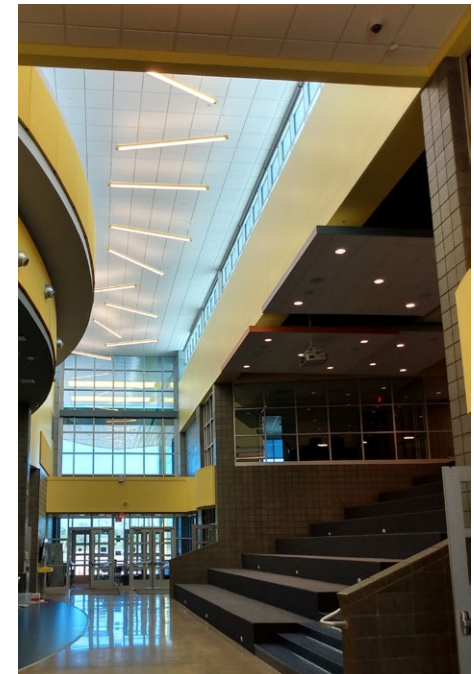
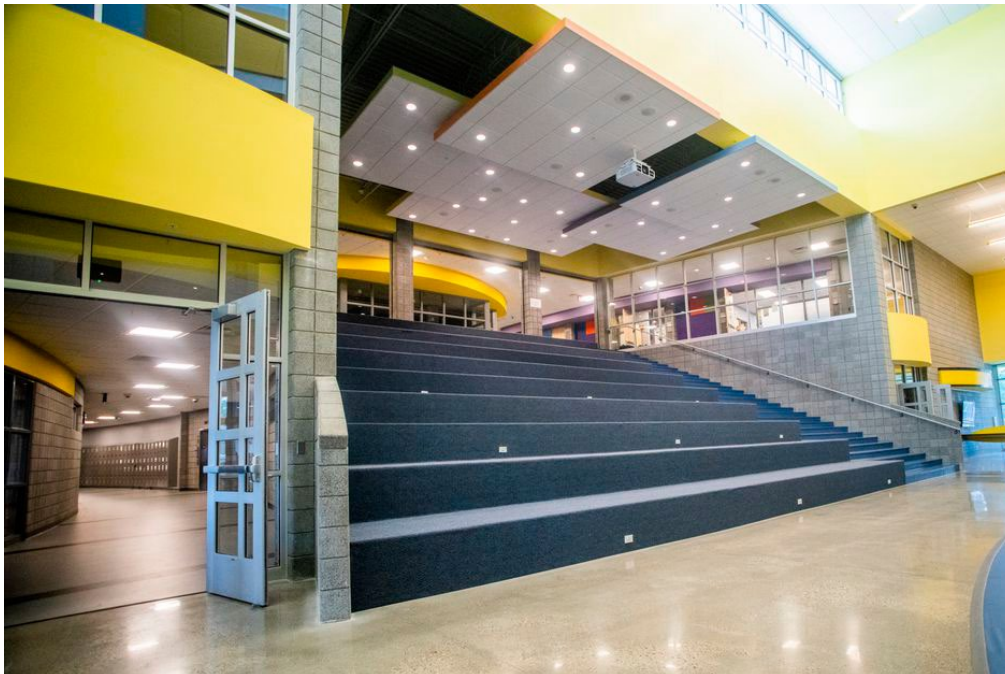
The classroom corridors are a loop, so there are no wings to get lost in. Traveling any corridor brings you back to Main Street, no matter what level you are on.



Space Separation – Flexibility

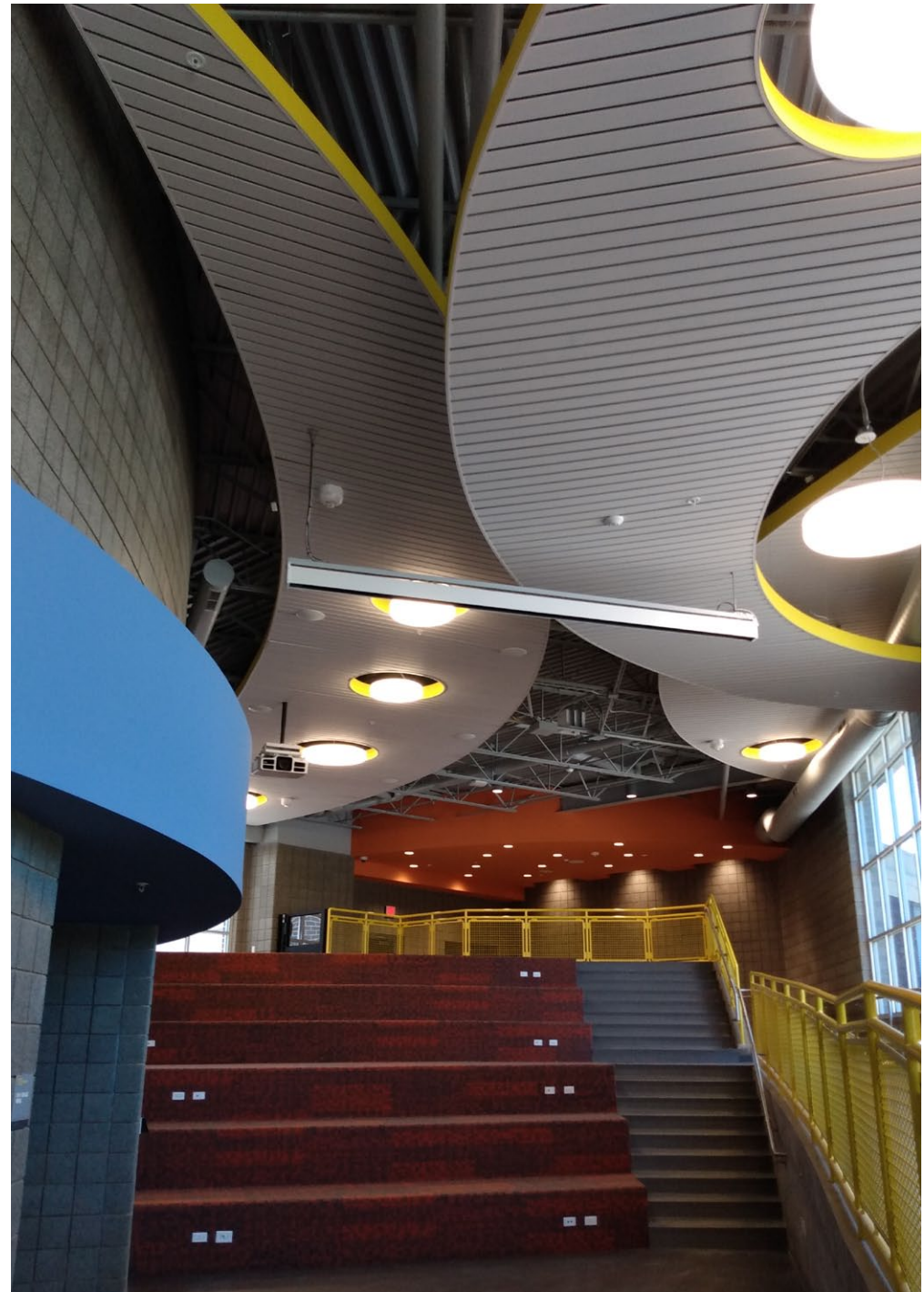
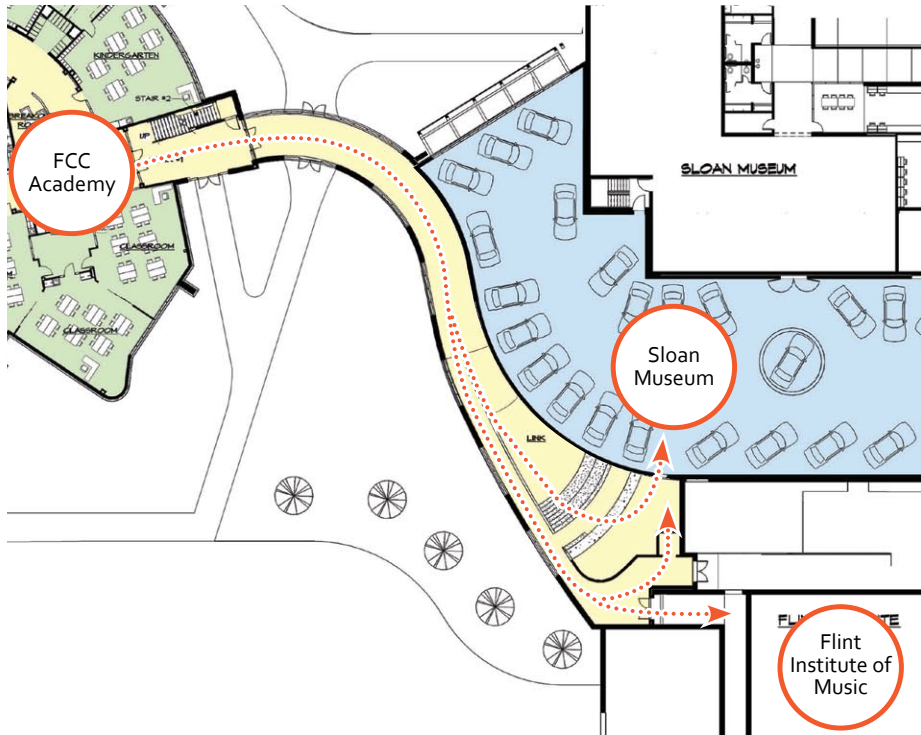
All of the “public” spaces are located off of Main Street and access to the 1st floor classroom corridors are through lockable doors and at the top of the Learning Stairs is a row of fire rated rolling shutters that close off the Learning Stair from the second floor classroom corridors.

This arrangement allows the school to have after school programs or even to rent out the “public” spaces and still control access to the classroom functions.



The Link

An important aspect of locating the school where it is on campus is accessibility to two of the more heavily accessed Cultural Center facilities without going outside. The link portion of the project (Phase 2) allows students and staff to travel to the Sloan Museum of Discovery and the Flint Institute of Music without ever going outside. This is most critical during cold winter days and bad weather days. The link houses 8th grade classrooms and a smaller Learning Stair to be shared with the Sloan Museum and the Flint Institute of Music for their programs as well.



Exterior Visual Expression

Along the two-story curved glass classroom portion of the building, the Architects have created a two-story high colonnade with exposed steel column elements and bright banners that extol the goals of education. These banners are designed to be easily replaced with new banners, new colors, and new messages of inspiration. So even the main visual expression of the school is flexible and can change with the times.



PHOTO: Rick Smith



PHOTO: Rick Smith



Specialty Spaces

See previous comments that list some very unusual and flexible learning spaces including classroom clusters, team rooms, break out rooms, project rooms, Microsoft® Innovation Center, and high school quality science labs.



Facility Fit within the Community

In this case the community is the Flint Cultural Center. Constructed in the early to mid-1950's, the Flint Cultural Center was a great undertaking to assemble all of the Cultural Arts needs in a single two block area that even today is the envy of many larger cities. In the last 10 years Flint Institute of Music and Flint Institute of Art have experienced major exterior and interior upgrades to create a more contemporary expression. The Flint Public Library and Sloan Museum of Discovery are currently experiencing complete renovations and new, contemporary visual expressions. The new Flint Cultural Center Academy also needed to reflect a contemporary expression to relate to the evolving Cultural Center. By incorporating a new vehicle entry to the Cultural Center as part of the new school, the Flint Cultural Center Academy becomes the first impression of the Cultural Center and it's curving, sleek look, bold lines and colorful exterior set the standard that the new Cultural Center hopes to establish.

Facility Inspires and Motivates

The whole goal of the new Charter School is to inspire and motivate students and staff to explore, imagine, to see beyond their small world and to use the experiences they derive to excel in their education beyond what their current futures hold for them. The new FCC Academy was designed at every level to inspire and motivate through visual expressions and physical spaces. All of these special attributes have been explained previously in this dossier.



Applewood Estate



Flint Institute of Art



Flint Public Library



Sloan Museum of Discovery



Flint Institute of Music



The Whiting



Longway Planetarium/Flint Repertory Theatre

■ Project Achieves Goals and Objectives

On the first day that the school opened to students, parents, staff and the community, the new FCC Academy had achieved one of its main goals: To excite and inspire. Huge smiles, excited pointing and awestruck wonder was the norm for the day and adults wondered aloud what their school lives might have been with facilities like this.

By October, the students and the staff at the surrounding Cultural Center facilities had fallen in love. Staff became comfortable with the new process and students delighted in traveling through their new campus for hands on experiences and the second major goal had been achieved with the immersion of students into the Cultural Center.

However, it will be years before the new Academy can claim full achievement of its major goal: Changing the outcomes of disadvantaged students. The first year was exciting and good things were happening but it will take time to ensure that this new learning experience will be as successful as hoped. This project is much more than steel and glass; it is finding new ways to create successful students and measuring that success, which will take some time. But right now, everyone is excited and good things are happening.



PHOTO: Rick Smith



PHOTOS: Microsoft Education



Project Achieves School District and Community Goals

District Goals

The brand new School Board established their learning objectives which mirror their goals and objectives listed above. School Board Members are leaders of the Cultural Center facilities and, as such, are directly involved in the educational outcomes of the school, which is dramatically different from any other school.

Partnering with Microsoft, the FCCA curriculum incorporates Microsoft Education tools geared towards technology based instruction by utilizing the Microsoft K-12 Education Transformation Framework platform. There are only 23 Microsoft Flagship schools worldwide, with the Flint Cultural Center Academy being 1 out of 3 located in the United States.

With the curriculum in place and the facilities everything they ever dreamed of, the Cultural Center learning process is taking place just as was envisioned. Now they wait for the process to lead their students to success.

Community Goals

There has been a resurgence in the City of Flint over the last 15 years with major building projects transforming the downtown area and 5 college campuses growing within the Flint area. But everyone understands that a City cannot be reborn if its schools are failing. Traditional educational changes have not created the success needed. But it is the advent of a whole new process for students to learn that has the community excited. If the prototype can prove successful, then other schools within the Flint area will have a model for changing student outcomes in Flint and thus improve the health of the community.



PHOTO: Microsoft Education

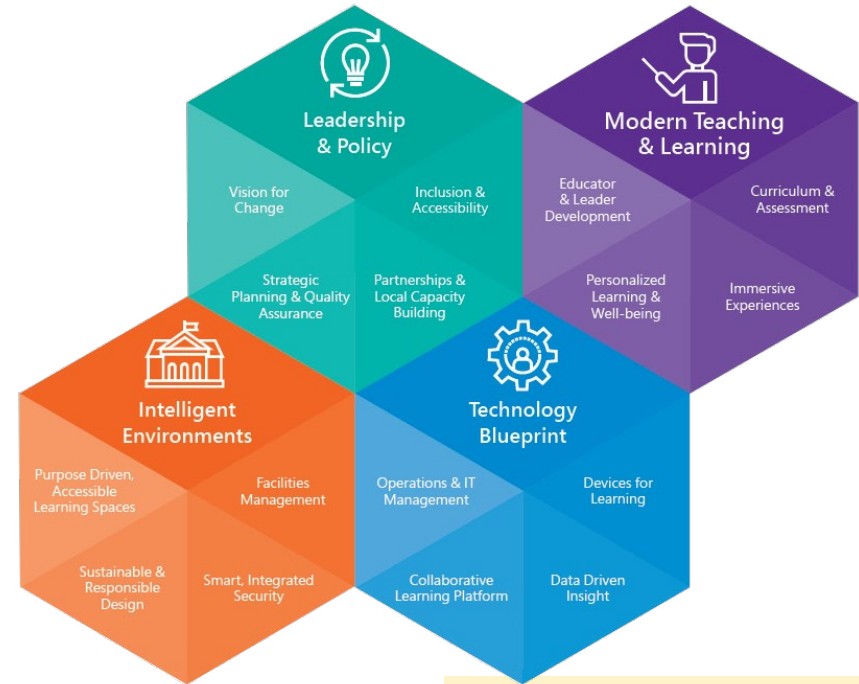
"Our deep focus on education transformation at Microsoft has provided us the opportunity to observe and learn from incredible school leaders—from the innovative ways they use technology to their thoughtful approach to evolving traditional education."

These great leaders at FCCA have truly taught us about the journey it takes to create a beautiful, well supported school like this one from the ground up. While we continue to listen and learn to add more value and support, it's these schools that shape Microsoft Education."

~Microsoft Education



PHOTO: Rick Smith



What is the Microsoft® Flagship Program

A new program focused on NEW school construction, Microsoft Flagship Schools Program brings leadership, learning, technology, and infrastructure together; building safe, secure, optimized, and efficient schools; providing personal, predictive learning that inspires and empowers students.

Microsoft portable devices empower students to learn and grow anywhere.

Working with a dedicated Microsoft Flagship Schools Project Leader, we'll work together from the early planning and design stages to beyond school opening, to create incredible learning environments that deliver best of class learning outcomes and are adaptable to future changes to education.

Unintended Results and Achievements

The development of the new FCC Academy, as you can see by this dossier, was intended to be much more than just building another school building for an established district. It was about changing the process, changing attitudes and changing student performance through immersion in the Cultural Center community.

Since every aspect of the building design and educational process was created with specific achievements and goals in mind, there was little room for unintended results.

But a very pleasant surprise was the response to the concept and to the bold design of the building. The first pleasant surprise for any Charter School was that a very successful suburban school superintendent “retired” from his large, successful, school district to come to FCC Academy to lead the effort to change lives in the City of Flint.

As a new Charter School, every teacher, every aide, every staff member had to be hired. It was a very pleasant surprise to see the number of highly qualified teachers who flocked to apply to FCC Academy for an opportunity to be a part of something this special.

Although not a big surprise, it was very rewarding to see how many parents put their students into the lottery to attend the new school and the broad smiles of those select few who became the first student body of FCC Academy. With a long waiting list to get into the school, it is obvious that the Flint community is excited about the opportunities that the new Charter School will bring to Flint, Michigan.



PHOTO: Microsoft Education



PHOTO: Microsoft Education



PHOTO: Microsoft Education

Appendix A

Refer to Appendix A for Educational Specifications and Educational Visioning Documents.

