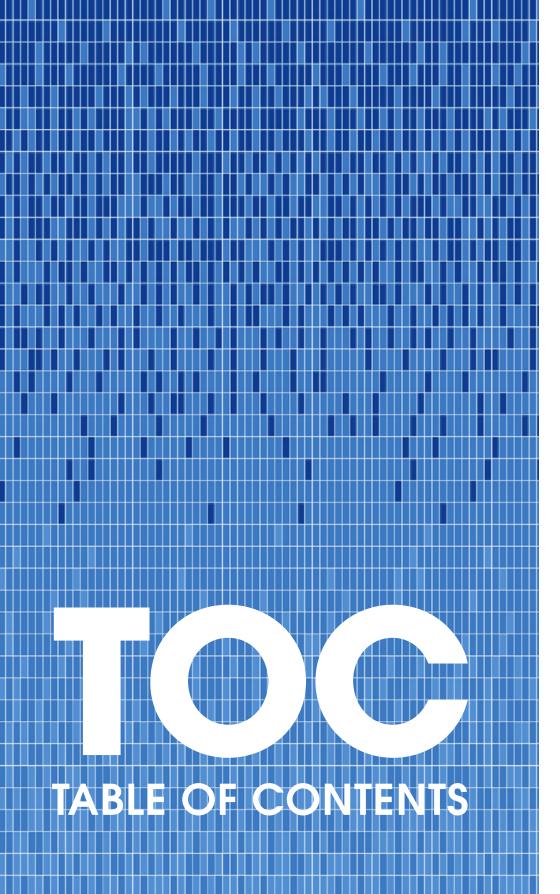
### Sheldon Lake ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

### Through the Lens of Performing and Visual Arts

SHELDON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT HOUSTON, TEXAS







**Executive Summary & Scope of Work and Budget** 

**School Community & Engagement** 

**Educational Environment** 

**Physical Environment** 

**Results of the Process and Project** 

**Educational Visioning Documents** 

03

06

10

16

24

28

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sheldon Lake Elementary School emerged out of an initiative in Sheldon Independent School District to roll out specialized learning programs to each of their six elementary schools. This initiative, the Compass Schools program, promotes the District's belief that parent voice is an essential part in a child's education by providing parents an opportunity to make a choice in a program that fits their child's interests.

Compass Schools is for all elementary school students enrolled in Sheldon Independent School District (ISD). The program offers three tracks: Performing and Visual Arts (PVA), Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), and Technology. Each specialty area is offered at two Sheldon ISD elementary schools.

The PVA track was recommended for Sheldon Lake Elementary School after a sub-committee of district staff, design team members, content experts, and community members evaluated a range of School of Choice selection criteria. The committee also discussed the facility implications for each specialty area and felt that the unique performance spaces of a PVA school would be well-suited for a new construction project. "Provide personalized learning opportunities for all students. All campuses should have different ways to engage and interact with the curriculum. Spark Interest in the students. Every child to be comfortable in their learning space."

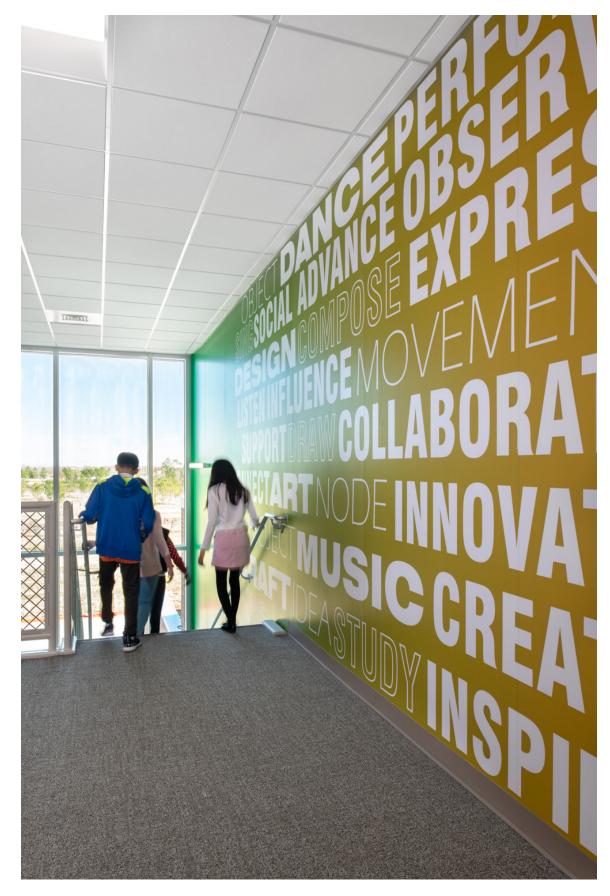


As one of two campuses with a PVA focus, the goal for Sheldon Lake Elementary School was to provide an open learning environment that uses student interests to excite them about learning and celebrates the unique activities happening within its walls.

The design approach considered each aspect of this new school of choice through the lens of Performing and Visual Arts (PVA), resulting in a facility that challenges the notion of hosting a specialized program as only one piece of the educational environment and instead makes one conceptualize the entire building as a vehicle for pedagogical choice.

Throughout the visual landscape of this new school stand iconic features that support PVA programs. Rather than pieces hidden within a traditional school environment, the spaces define the entire building and use the intrigue and passion of PVA to engage and support the learners. The two-story building has a free-flowing design, where the theater, dining, and library spaces don't have walls but still have their own core. The design also provides several visual and physical connections to an exterior courtyard space where students can interact with nature.

While research indicates that an arts-centered curriculum is beneficial to language and reading development, Sheldon Lake Elementary School also fills community amenity gaps by providing highly-desired and much-needed performance, gathering, and shared green spaces.



### **SCOPE OF WORK & BUDGET**

Sheldon Lake Elementary School is the sixth elementary school in Sheldon ISD. The new twostory building is located on a shared site near the new high school and football stadium.

At the heart of the design are a range of PVA spaces—including a Blackbox theater, and art, music, dance, and design studios—that define the entire building and serve as a continual reminder of this school's special purpose..

**OWNER:** Sheldon Independent School District

**LOCATION:** Houston, Texas

**CONSTRUCTION COST:** \$19,998,205

OCCUPANCY DATE: August 2019

**SITE SIZE:** 362 acres total with shared site, 38 acres for ES

#### SQUARE FOOTAGE:

87,654

**CAPACITY:** 700 students

#### **GRADES SERVED:**

1st-5th





- A Main Entry
- (B) Parent Drop-off
- (C) Bus Drop-off
- (D) Learning Plaza / Courtyard
- (E) Play Fields
- F Building Services
- G Perimeter Campus Access Road

#### Your work to this point

- What are the current specialty areas in which your campus has indicated some interest?
  - Share with group
  - List on large pap
- Issues that were important to your campus

### THROUGH THE LENS OF PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS

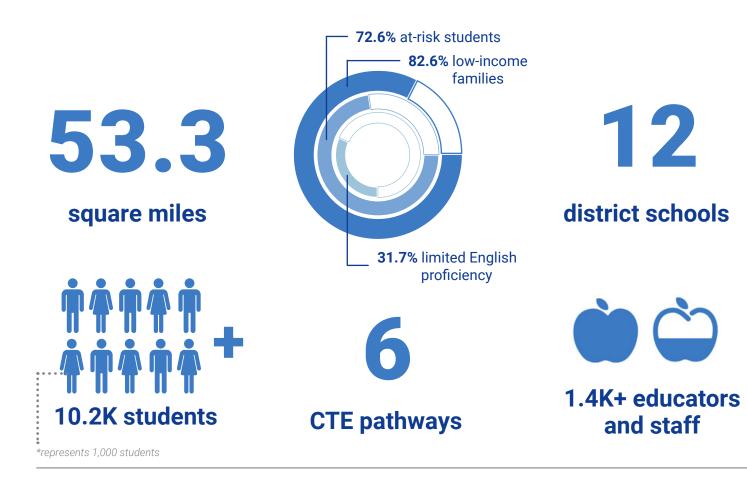
## SCHOOL & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



# MEET SHELDON ISD:

Sheldon Independent School District (ISD) is located in an unincorporated part of Harris County, Texas, approximately 20 miles northeast of Houston. With a 3-year enrollment growth rate of 11.35%, it is one of the top 10 largest growing districts among the 60 that serve the ten counties comprising the Greater Houston area.

As a Title I district, Sheldon ISD strives to provide personalized learning opportunities that will engage and inspire students, empowering them to own their education as they prepare for their futures. The District also places a high emphasis on the importance of parental involvement, believing that a community's collective power is greater than individual efforts and that family is the foundation of society.



### LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

The visioning and planning process for Sheldon Lake Elementary School began with a subcommittee of district staff, design team members, content experts, and community members, who were asked to evaluate various specialty areas of learning and to ultimately recommend the Compass School tracks for Sheldon Lake Elementary School as well as the district's remaining elementary campuses.

Meeting four times over the course of two months, the subcommittee's efforts focused on identifying the sub-committees' highest aspirations for each child who would attend this new facility as well as reviewing the facility implications for each specialty area. This included thoroughly evaluating of a range of School of Choice selection criteria:

- Will it engage students?
- Do we have students who are interested in the area?
- Will it provide opportunities for students' creativity?
- Will students experience solving real-life problems?
- Will it lead to personalized learning opportunities?
- Will it be available / appropriate for all students?



- Will it allow students to learn from their strengths?
- Will it allow students to explore future careers?
- Will it provide opportunities for students to create long-term goals for themselves?
- Can we currently provide vertical alignment to middle school and high school?

## THROUGH THE LENS OF PVA

The project team met with a leading educational specialist for a 3-day design charrette to begin crafting initial project concepts. This third-party facilitator helps clients meet their highest aspirations and develop a new vision for facility designs that support imagination and innovation through comprehensive and customized planning endeavors, including:

- Academy Planning & Implementation Strategies
- Facilities Visioning

ENGAGEMEN

COMMUNITY

Š

**CHOOL** 

S

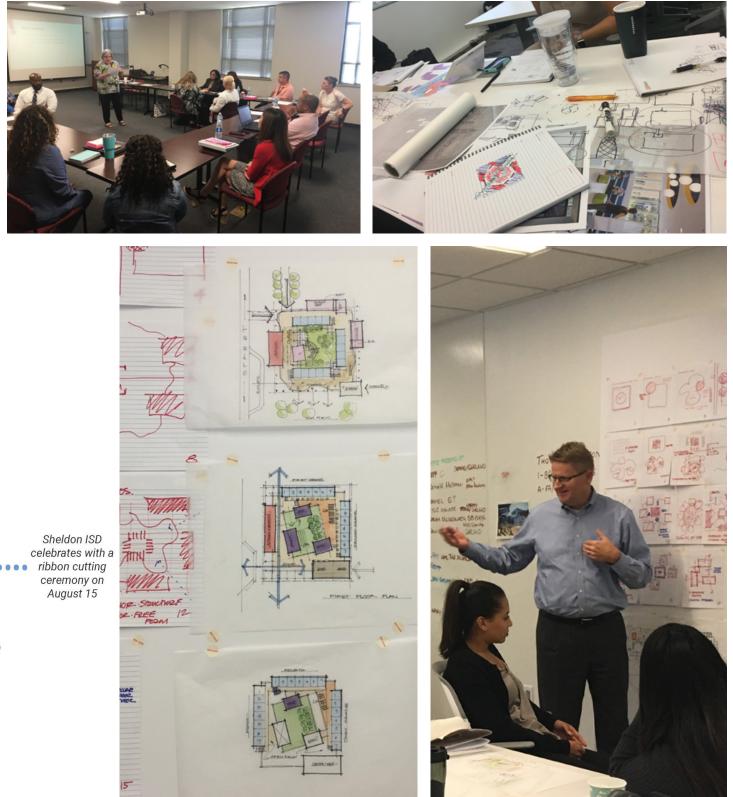
• Grade Level Configuration Studies

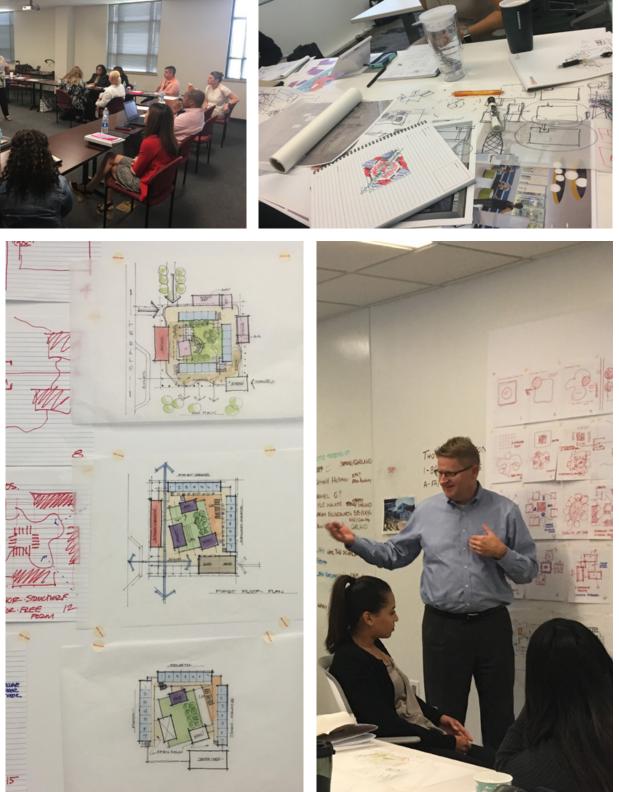
Nine programming design charrette, and

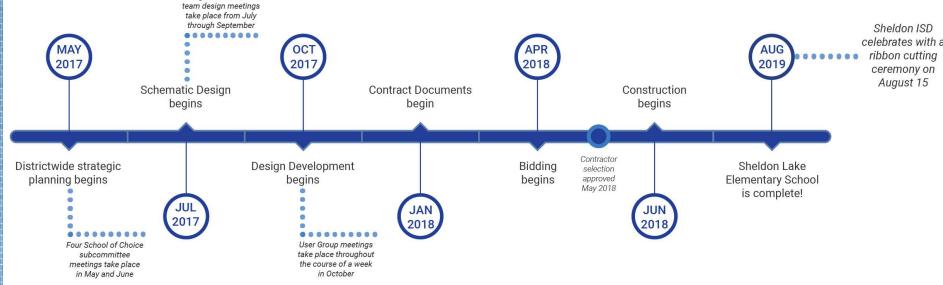
- Professional Learning Planning
- Strategic Planning
- Technology Integration
- Digital by Design

- Spaces that encourage student ownership for learning
- Flexible spaces (including furnishings)
- Safety and security
- Integration of technology into the instructional process
- Educational specifications

During the charrette, the team discussed what it meant to be a performing and visual arts-focused school and, through that lens of PVA, generated concepts for initial review by Sheldon ISD and the design committee that were driven by an intent to bring the programmatic spaces to the forefront of the school.







### INVESTING IN THE SHELDON COMMUNITY

Sheldon Lake Elementary School is a School of Choice that supports the districtwide investment in providing learning environments to their community that educate and energize students using their interests to excite them about every aspect of their learning.

The new two-story building is located on a shared site with Sheldon ISD's new high school and football stadium. This challenged the team to design the overall vernacular to harmoniously blend in with its surroundings while also creating a distinct identity for the elementary campus that responds to the different pedagogical, safety and security, and emotional and social needs of its users.

The facility is designed not just to get the students interested but to also create increased opportunities for parents to be involved, creating a place where the school is the community, and the community is the school; they are one and the same.



## EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT



### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

# Sheldon ISD will provide personalized learning opportunities to ensure all students graduate college and career ready

#### **GUIDING PRINCIPLE #1:**

#### Attract and engage students: Make learning come alive through the lens of the arts

Correlative studies show a strong relationship between arts education and deep engagement in learning as well as a motivation to learn for understanding.



#### **GUIDING PRINCIPLE #2:**

#### Create opportunities for creativity and personalized learning

Studies measuring creative thinking, critical thinking, problem-solving and reasoning all find these functions increase and improve when arts education is added to the educational mix.



**DISTRICT MOTTO** Every Child, Every Day **DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT** 

#### **GUIDING PRINCIPLE #3:**

#### Support the goals, interests, strengths, and needs of all students

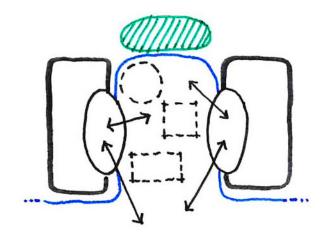
Arts contribute to academic success for students from low socio-economic backgrounds, English language learners, and students with special needs, as well as helping prepare youth to apply their skills directly to employment opportunities.

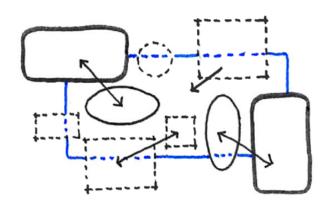


# SUPPORTING THE CURRICULUM

The design was driven by the intent to bring the programmatic PVA spaces to the forefront of the school. Rather than pieces hidden within a traditional school environment, the spaces define the entire building and use the intrigue and passion of PVA to engage and support the learners.

- Traditional spaces become extraordinary in the pursuit to support performing and visual arts, such as a Dance Studio in lieu of a traditional gym.
- Spaces for the Music program are designed to support opportunities for vertical integration with the music programs in junior and high school.
- In addition to its performance value, the Blackbox Theater also provides students with opportunities to see behind the curtain and learn about stage lighting, sound, set design, and more.
- The Design Studio is a space for scientific inquiry and learning, serving traditional elementary-level science lab functions while also providing a backdrop for the exploration of the intersection of science and the arts.









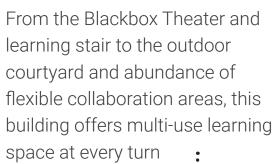


Extended learning spaces along the circulation have flexible .... furniture with bright colors and transparency into classrooms

Additional breakout spaces provide areas for quiet study and can accommodate various group sizes and learning functions

Small nooks promoting focus and contemplation have a fun and playful design that reflects the unique PVA activities taking place within the school





VARIETY





### MAXIMIZING FLEXIBILITY

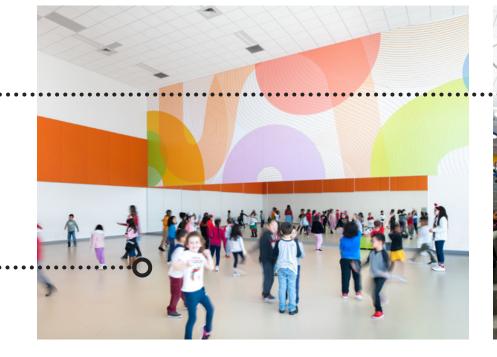
### The programmatic PVA spaces are designed to accommodate changing and evolving pegagogical needs.

The learning stair supports large group instruction and collaboration and can also accommodate performance audiences, student awards ceremonies, staff meetings, faculty trainings, and other school and district events.

Dance is a program that goes beyond traditional forms of the art. It fulfills Texas state requirements for physical education by offering a variety of movement and exercise, from ballet and modern dance, to gymnastics and balance activities, to parachute play and more.

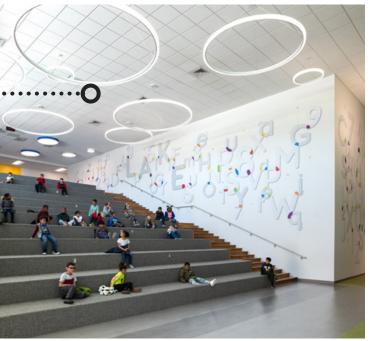
While there is not a traditional gymnasium with regulationsized sports courts, the design includes an outdoor covered play surface that can be outfitted as a sport court and maximize the flexibility of the PE program.

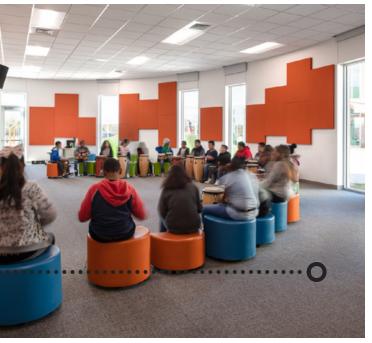
Three differently sized spaces support music program activities ranging from large group instruction to individual music training. The design includes acoustic treatments to limit sound travel outside the classroom and plenty of room for instrument storage.







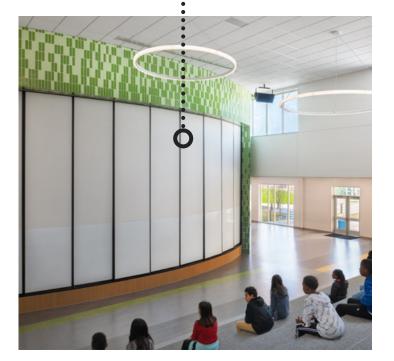




### MAXIMIZING FLEXIBILITY

Additional features such as movable partitions with writeable surfaces and outlets in the learning stair further enhance the ability of this space to support a wide range of activities.









The Blackbox theater and learning stair serve as an extension of the library and dining spaces.

The multi-configurable theaterin-the-round can support a performance on one side and a banquet on the other, even concurrently, providing added flexibility for educational use.

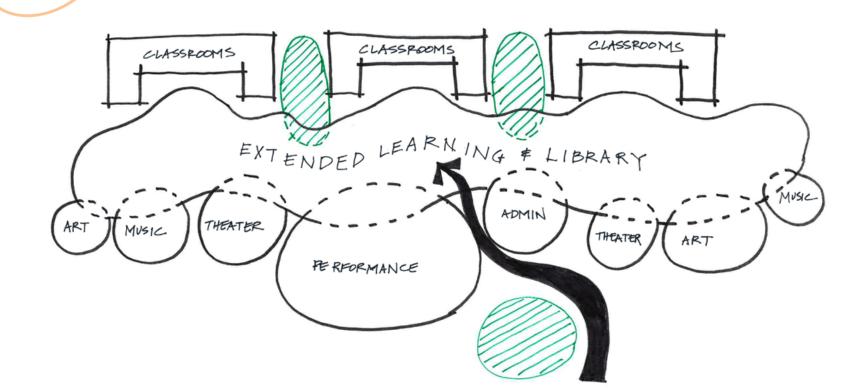


## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

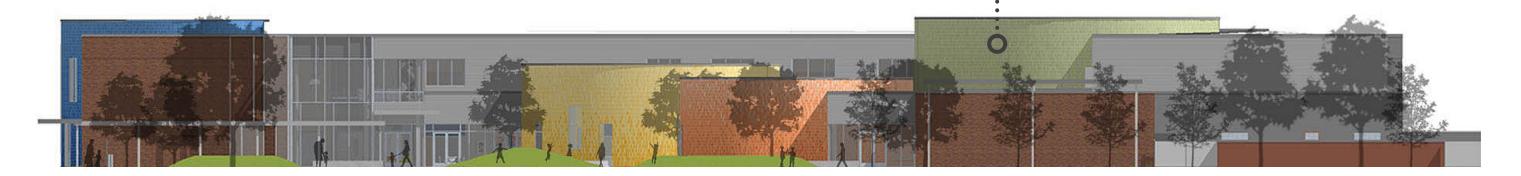
**I**K

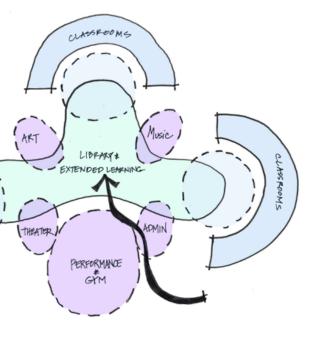


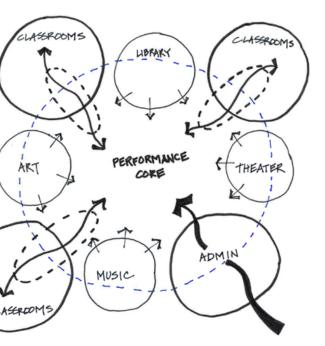
### DESIGN INFLUENCES



The goal for this new PVA elementary school was to provide an open and engaging learning environment that encourages student collaboration, provides visual connections to nature, and celebrates the unique activities taking place within its walls. The **multi-configurable theater-in-the-round** influenced both the interior and exterior spaces, becoming a landmark that drove the building organization.

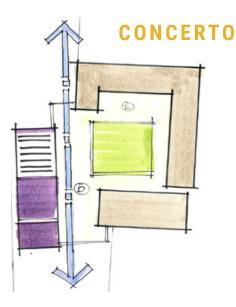


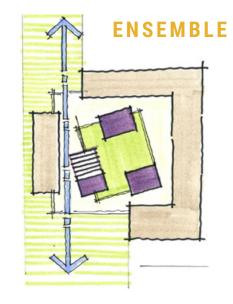






To achieve the vision of making the PVA spaces front and center, the design team generated three concepts to present to Sheldon ISD and the design committee:

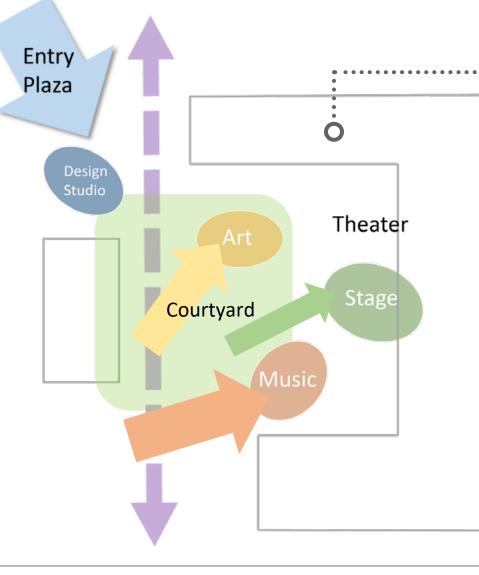


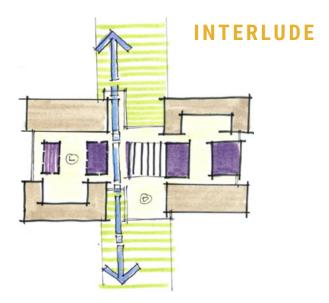


#### ••••• The final design translation combines the Concerto and Ensemble concepts.

Concerto creates a design that showcases its intent to the exterior, sharing with the public what this school is all about. Ensemble recognizes the beauty created by each individual discipline while also showcasing that wearing all in disciplines in concert creates something bigger than one can individually. The single community is broken open at the corners to expose the programs within.

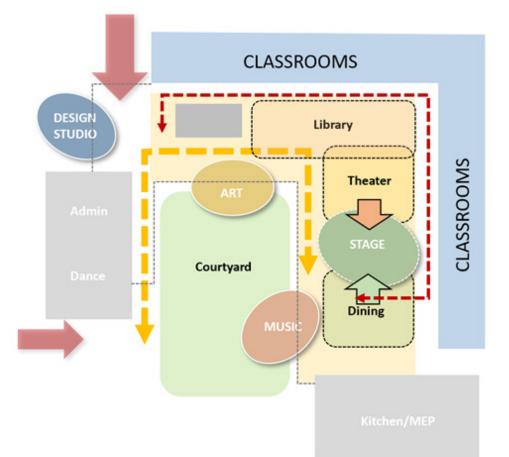


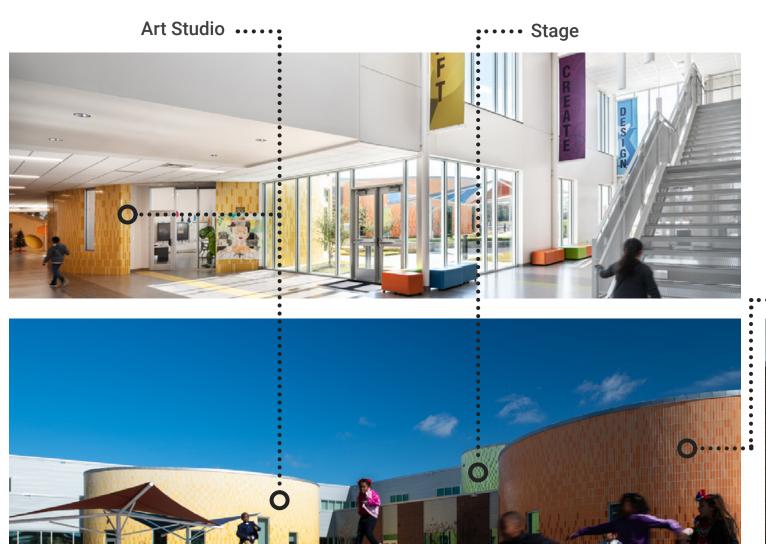




# BUILDING FLOW & ORGANIZATION

Resulting from the planning process is a free-flowing design, where the theater, dining, and library spaces don't have walls but still have their own core. The iconic "drums" that house the programmatic spaces hold primary positions within the building and serve as anchors informing the building organization and orienting students as they move through the school.





····· Music



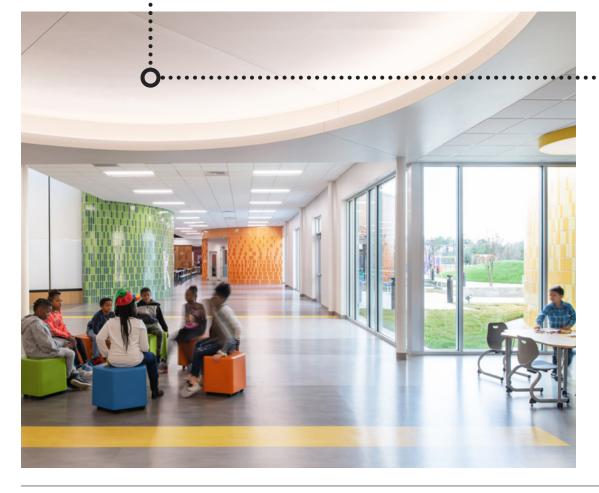
<image>

### INDOOR/OUTDOOR CONNECTIONS

The courtyard blurs the lines between interior and exterior-place a roof over this exterior space and it will feel very similar to the interior.

The PVA drums that orient students within the school are also seen from the courtyard, creating interior and exterior spaces that experientially feel the same.







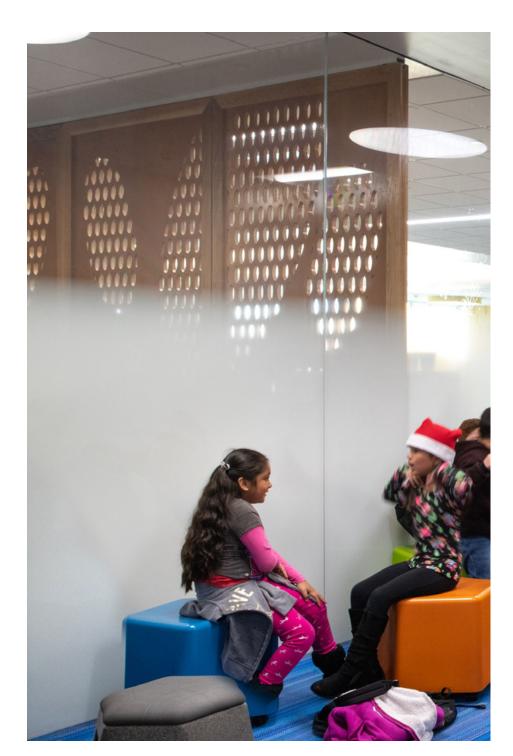




### SUSTAINABLE & BIOPHILIC DESIGN

Sustainability is more than energy efficiency; it is the protection and wellness of the occupants of the built environment. The school achieves this through a biophilic design that provides visual connection to the outdoors, evokes feelings of closeness with nature from the indoors, and encourages constant movement throughout the facility.

Additional efforts to increase energy conservation and reduce energy cost include high performance glass, minimizing the amount of air changes, maximizing north-south facing classrooms, and a white reflective roof.







# COMMUNITY CONTEXT

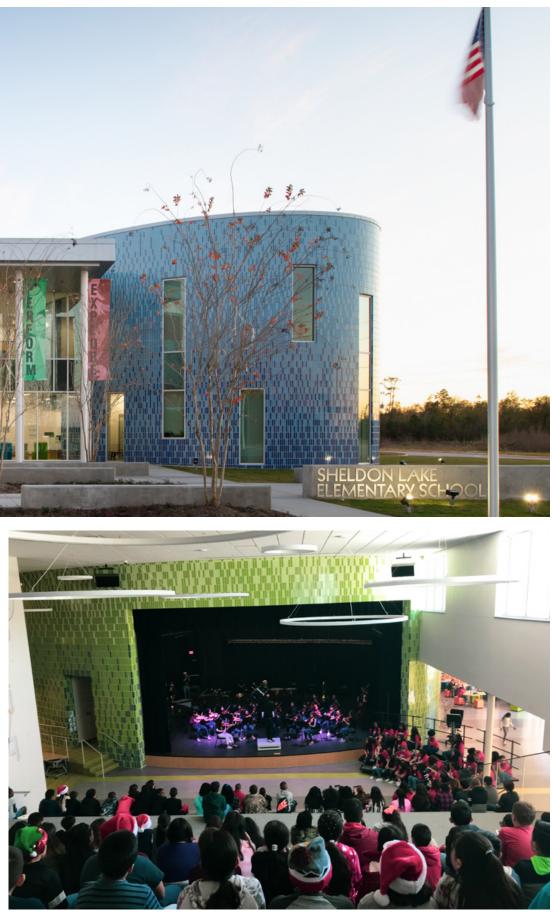
The team was charged with developing a project that blended with the other two facilities on its shared site while having its own identity and providing a more intimate and protected exterior environment that recognizes the building's smaller scale and the scale of its users.

The District invested in the courtyard to expand the school's ability to invite in the community for performances and additional gathering opportunities. Additional shared spaces, such as the theater and learning stair and the dance studio, provide numerous opportunities to draw parents together and encourage them to engage with each other.

The nearby high school was planned with an auditorium that can seat approximately 850 people. With an eye on efficiency, the school was designed with the intent to utilize this auditorium for occasional large performances or ceremonies.







# INSPIRATION & MOTIVATION

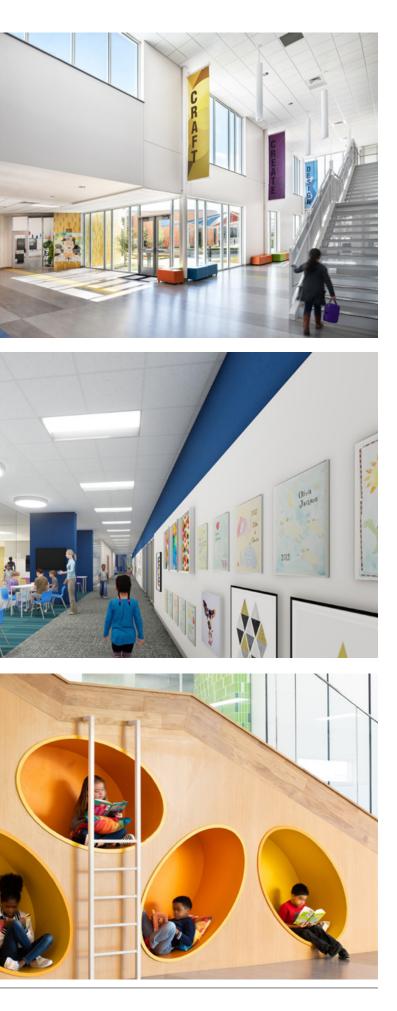




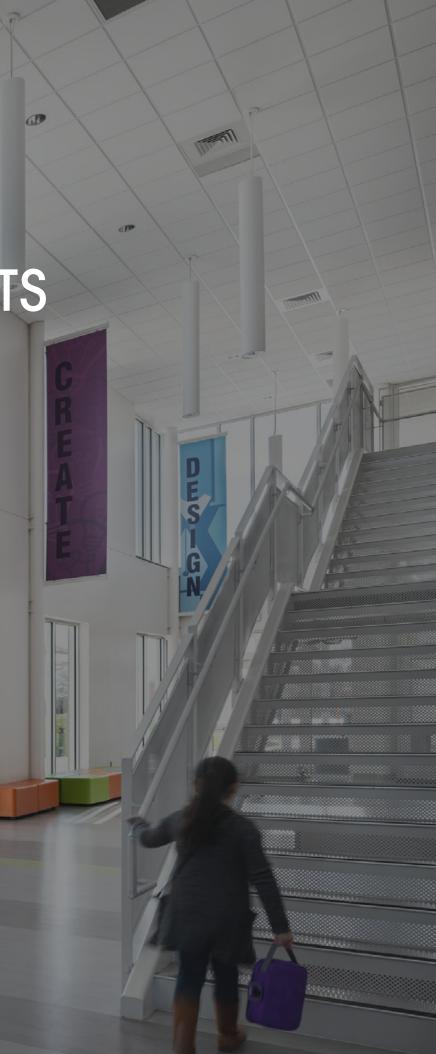
Throughout the visual landscape of this school stand iconic features that support PVA programs. They become prominent organizational features that use the interest, intrigue, and passion of these artistic programs to engage and support the students learning in this innovative and creative elementary school.

Classroom transparency, graphics, and signage support and promote the arts-based curriculum, walls serve as gallery spaces to display student artwork along with a dedicated gallery space adjacent to the main school entrance.

The design provides the campus with its own identity and responds to the scale of its users through a bright, playful, intimate, and engaging environment that embodies its arts-centered curriculum to support the unique needs of the students.



# RESULTS OF THE PROCESS AND THE PROJECT



### ENHANCING THE EDUCATION

The facility promotes and supports research indicating that an arts-centered curriculum is most beneficial to language and reading development.

The first School of Choice in the district, this facility challenges the notion of hosting a specialized program as only a piece within a traditional school environment and instead makes one conceptualize the entire building through the lens of Choice, in this case, PVA.

And those three initial design concepts – concerto, ensemble, and interlude? They now hang in the Principal's office as a point of pride for the new school and the unique planning process that brought it to fruition. "[The students] came in last Thursday to meet their teachers, and the looks on their faces were priceless. They really thought that they were moving to college."

- SCHOOL PRINCIPAL



2



### ENHANCING THE DISTRICT

Sheldon Lake Elementary School supports the District's investment in providing their community with personalized learning environments that best fit individual student interests and needs.

As the flagship project for Sheldon ISD's Compass Schools initiative, the new school of choice upholds the District's commitment that all schools under this initiative will:

- Share the same underlying curriculum
- Provide opportunities and resources for all learners to facilitate student success
- Prepare all students to be college and career ready.
- Use project-based learning to develop leadership skills that will prepare them for the future workplace.
- Commit to building parent partnerships and providing volunteer engagement opportunities.



2

### ENHANCING THE COMMUNITY

The outdoor area serves as an additional performance, gathering, and amenity space, which offers new and much-needed opportunities for family and community engagement.

5

ш

7

0 2

9

S S S

111

C 0

2 9

ш

I

-

14 0

S

ULT

S 111 œ

The campus is also home to Eagle University, a site for the Center for Afterschool Summer & Enrichment (CASE) Partnership Project, which aims to promote social and emotional learning skills (SEL) and provide increased support of numeracy and literacy development for economically disadvantaged students between the ages of 4 and 12 (or up to the age of 19 with a documented disability).



1111

### EDUCATIONAL VISIONING DOCUMENTS



#### VISIONING

The Visioning Process was the interactive process by which the team identified project goals and began to prioritize space needs for PVA.

At the beginning of the process, the Sheldon ISD principals and curriculum instruction leadership team discussed the value and benefits of teaching through the lens of PVA. Recognizing the unique nature of this project, the design team has taken the approach of developing this school through that same lens by addressing design decisions in a way that upholds the project vision.

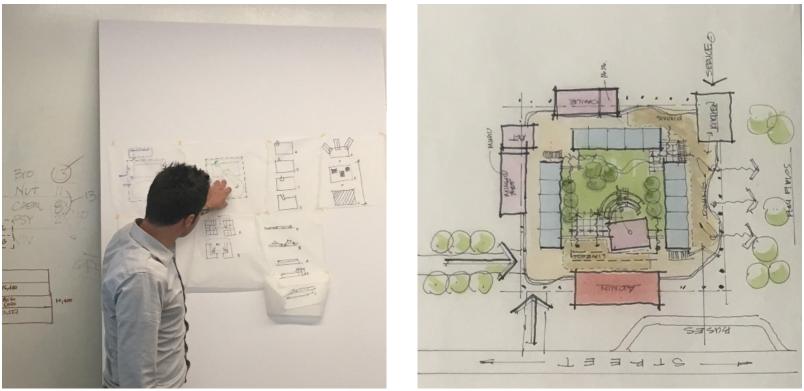
The visioning process was compressed to meet the district schedule; however, time was still allocated for the committee to establish the programs and vision for a PVA school and to explore multiple design approaches for this project.

#### **PROGRAMMING PROCESS**

Programming consisted of four planning meetings, where the team worked collaboratively to develop a room-by-room list of spaces to include in the new elementary school and identify the approximate size of each space. This process included an exploration of several precedents from other PVA schools, including room-by-room programs, floor plans, photos, and videos. The team also reviewed existing District facilities to identify opportunities for improving space utilization and energy efficiencies and discussed what it means to be a school of the 21st century.

The final program provides for a 700-student school with specialized spaces for the visual arts, theater, dance, and music. This includes 6 classrooms for each grade level (1st through 5th) and one additional "flex" classroom to provide some ability to accommodate demographic fluctuations.





The Sheldon Lake Elementary School Program (included separately) provides a more detailed look at the district-approved program document.