

Thomas Jefferson High School & Walnut Hill Leadership Academy

Dallas Independent School District – Dallas, Texas





Scope of Work and Budget

Thomas Jefferson High School

PROJECT SIZE: 152,000 SF new construction/172,000 SF renovation/324,000 SF total
SITE AREA: 40 acres (shared with WHILA)
GRADES HOUSED: PK-8
STUDENT CAPACITY: 2,200 students
SQUARE FEET PER STUDENT: 147 SF
PROJECT COMPLETION DATE: December 2022
INITIAL BUDGET: \$94,800,000
FINAL CONSTRUCTION COST: \$94,800,000
COST PER SQUARE FOOT : \$293/SF

Walnut Hill International Leadership Academy

PROJECT SIZE: 126,647 SF
SITE AREA: 40 acres (shared with TJHS)
GRADES HOUSED: 9-12
STUDENT CAPACITY: 800 students
SQUARE FEET PER STUDENT: 158 SF
PROJECT COMPLETION DATE: December 2022
INITIAL BUDGET: \$44,300,000
FINAL CONSTRUCTION COST: \$44,300,000
COST PER SQUARE FOOT : \$350/SF

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Rainbow After the Storm

Rebuilding a Community Through Innovation & Resilience

When a tornado struck Thomas Jefferson High School, Cary Middle School, and Walnut Hill Elementary School in 2019, it totaled most of the structures and uprooted the students, many of which are first generation American. It also provided a blank slate for Dallas Independent School District (ISD) to reinvision the educational environment on the site.

After relocating students, the district went to work merging a PreK-8 model of education, International Baccalaureate program, a collaborative learning model, and application-based enrollment to create a unified PreK – 12th grade campus. Discussions of these innovations had already been in place, but the tragedy provided an opportunity for them to be actualized.

The middle school was replaced with a PreK-8 building, with lower and upper school academics separated by a shared cafeteria, media center, experiential courtyard, and administration. Two-thirds of the existing mid-century modern high school building was salvaged and renovated, while the athletics and dining buildings were replaced,

along with culinary arts, CTE and STEM learning, and a central media center. These spaces are all in line with recently published education specifications to facilitate collaborative learning and a progressive curriculum.

For both schools, connection to the outdoors, a sense of home, and spaces where students could own their learning was prioritized. Courtyards provide outdoor learning spaces and a place for students and visitors to engage in hands-on learning, socialize, and connect.

The project reinvented the landscape of Northwest Dallas and the learning opportunities available to a diverse population.

THIS IS A STORY OF RESILIENCE, CELEBRATION OF CULTURE, INCLUSION, AND INNOVATION, TAPPING INTO **THE POWER OF PLACE.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



IMAGE CREDIT: JEFFREY MCWHORTER

Disaster Strikes

A campus with 65 years of history was destroyed in a matter of minutes when an EF-3 tornado hit Thomas Jefferson High School and the existing elementary and middle schools in 2019, leaving little preserved. Within a matter of days, students and staff from these campuses were reassigned to existing Dallas ISD buildings, splitting students into multiple

campuses. Before the tornado struck, the district was already in the process of upgrading the school to transform it into a modern learning environment.

After assessing the damage, the district used this as an opportunity to take a campus-wide approach, creating a new PK-8 campus and a new high school on the same site.

"WE NEVER EXPECTED A TORNADO TO HIT AND DESTROY EVERYTHING IN A FEW SECONDS."

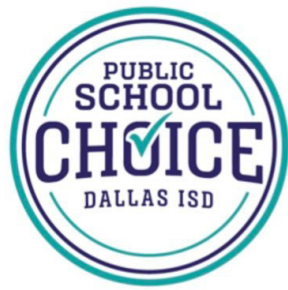
Thomas Jefferson High School student

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

Community Context

The campus is an anchor and support for students whose norm is disruption and change. With up to 92% of students economically advantaged and 73% limited in English proficiency, 80% of the student population was at risk of dropping out. The storm and subsequent upgrades gave Dallas ISD the perfect opportunity to transform the campus into an innovative magnet school

offering a more unified structure for enrollment, a more personal and elevated learning experience, and an engaging and interactive environment benefiting parents, students, and teachers. The campus-wide approach and innovative curriculum was poised to serve the community and set new standards by offering a quality learning environment.



Before the Storm

THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL

85.2%

of students at risk of dropping out

96.3%

of students are economically disadvantaged

79.2%

of students have limited English proficiency

WALNUT HILL INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

68.5%

of students at risk of dropping out

76.3%

of students are economically disadvantaged

64.3%

of students have limited English proficiency



Ongoing Innovation at Dallas ISD
Transforming Education

The Dallas ISD Office of Transformation and Innovation is on a mission to provide every student with a "best-fit" school that matches their specific interests, aspirations, and preferred learning styles, to advance their mission of being the "public school of choice."

- Transformation and Innovation Schools
- Magnet Schools
- Personalized Learning Department
- Centralized Enrollment Department



SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

The timing allowed Dallas ISD to develop an out-of-the-box idea quickly because the potential for a transformative approach was already germinating.

- Collaboration and coordination – all hands on deck
- From triage to transformation
- Disaster as a catalyst for doing something new
- Re-envision and elevate the educational experience that would await students at their new campus
- Goal: freshmen at the time of the tornado will graduate from their home campus



Stakeholders

All eyes were on Dallas ISD as tornado recovery efforts were in place and as decisions were being made to allow the community to move forward. The superintendent, cabinet, Office of Transformation and Innovation, principals, teachers, students, community, and design teams collaborated to provide the best outcome for learners and advance Dallas ISD as a true District of Innovation.

Challenges

Budget, site size, conflicting voices, and a tight timeline were challenges the stakeholders had to overcome together. Insurance was a small payout compared to overall cost of the unexpected need for creating a new school in line with current education specifications. Providing the required square footage per student, as well as parking, athletic fields, and outdoor learning maxed the site. Additionally, expense of constructing stormwater detention underground was required.

Families that were heavily involved in the existing stand-alone elementary school were hesitant to support an open enrollment PreK-8 school. A compressed timeline was set to ensure students returned to their home campus as soon as possible.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

Available Assets

Decisions as to what portions of the high school should be preserved and which should be destroyed had to be made. The mid-century modern aesthetic of the original building was valued, however, costs weighed heavily into the final decision.

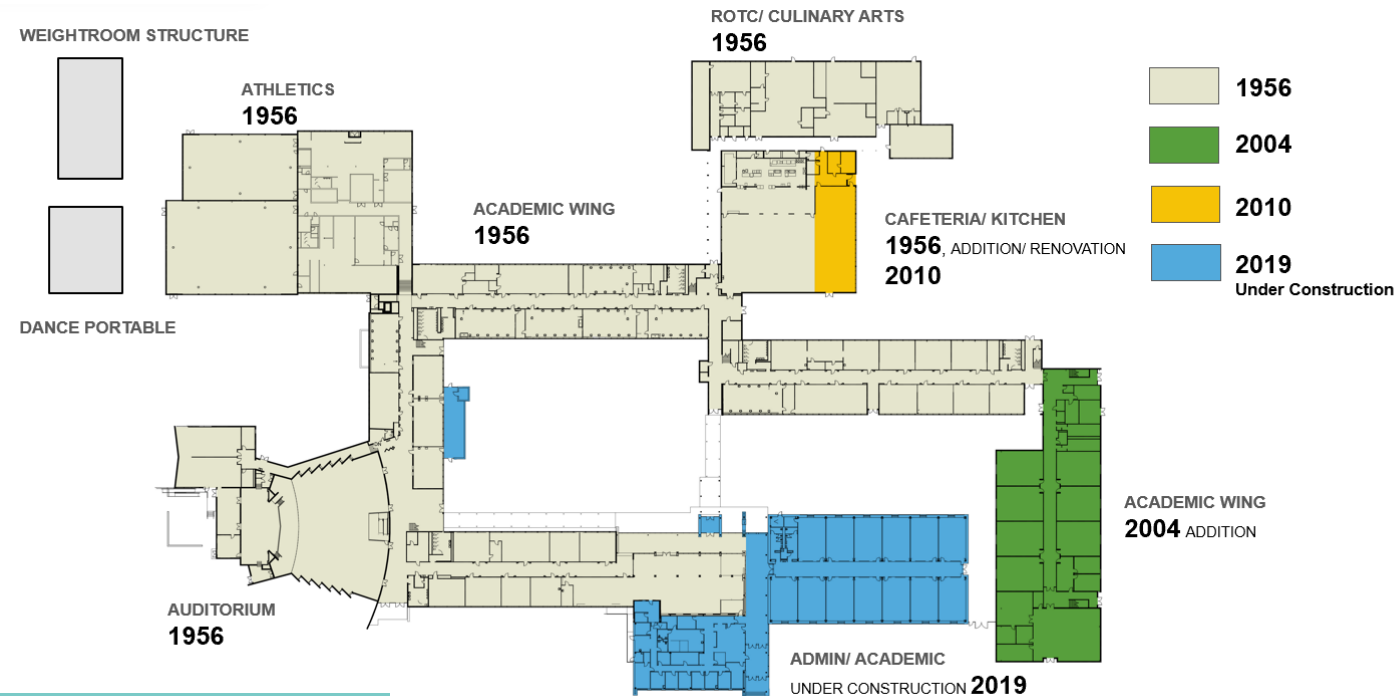
Prior to the tornado, Thomas Jefferson High School was one of the oldest school facilities in the district. Coincidentally, at the time the storm occurred, improvements and additions were already in progress on the existing site. Cary Middle School and the existing Walnut Hill Elementary School were leveled during the storm. The site needed to be analyzed to understand how it could adapt to include the new PK-8 school as well as improvements to Thomas Jefferson High School.



A HISTORIC PHOTO FROM WHEN THE SCHOOL OPENED IN 1956.



EXISTING CAMPUS SITE

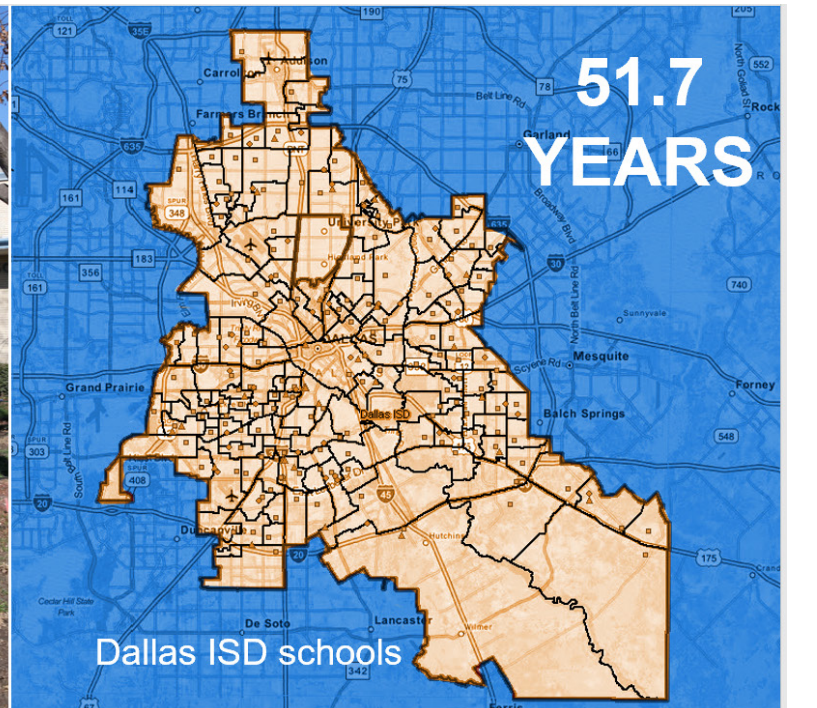


EXISTING HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS

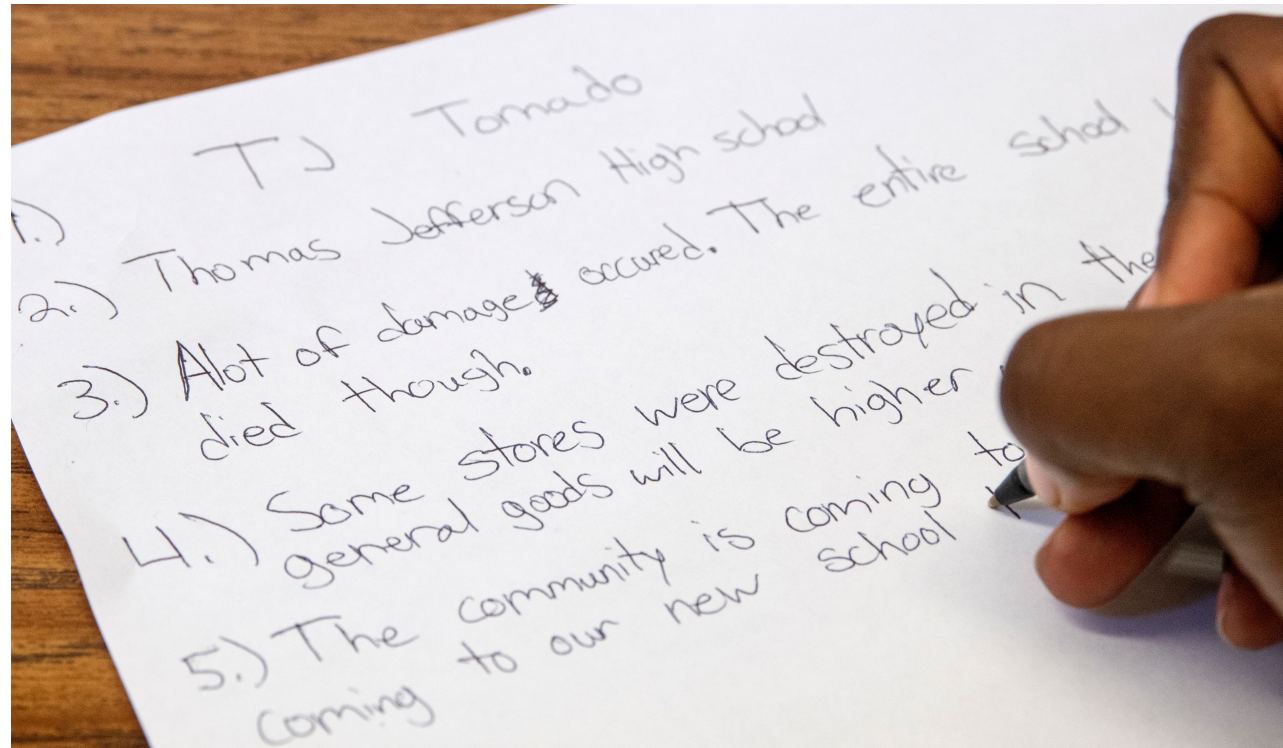


AVERAGE CAMPUS AGE

64 YEARS OLD
Thomas Jefferson High School



Dallas ISD schools



On the Road to Recovery

Visioning Process

Visioning was fast and furious, requiring clear communication and an efficient timeline. The initial two-day workshop included over 40 stakeholders as the district communicated their educational vision and provided feedback, and hands-on programming pieces were reconsidered and restructured countless times on the tight

site plan to validate a fit and facilitate discussion about the positioning and adjacency of grade levels.

Community focus groups followed to generate additional input and buy-in. It is a community campus and required the strong voices of students and parents.



IMAGE CREDIT: JEFFREY MCWHORTER

Dallas ISD's Vision for Thomas Jefferson High School & Walnut Hill International Leadership Academy

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

- PK-8 model
- PK-12 on one site
- IB Leadership Academy

DESIGN APPROACH

Innovation from high-level planning all the way down to the details.

FUNDING

- Insurance
- Bond
- General operating budget

Guiding Principles

1 Inclusion

2 Equity

3 Innovation

4 Wellbeing

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

Campus

PK-8

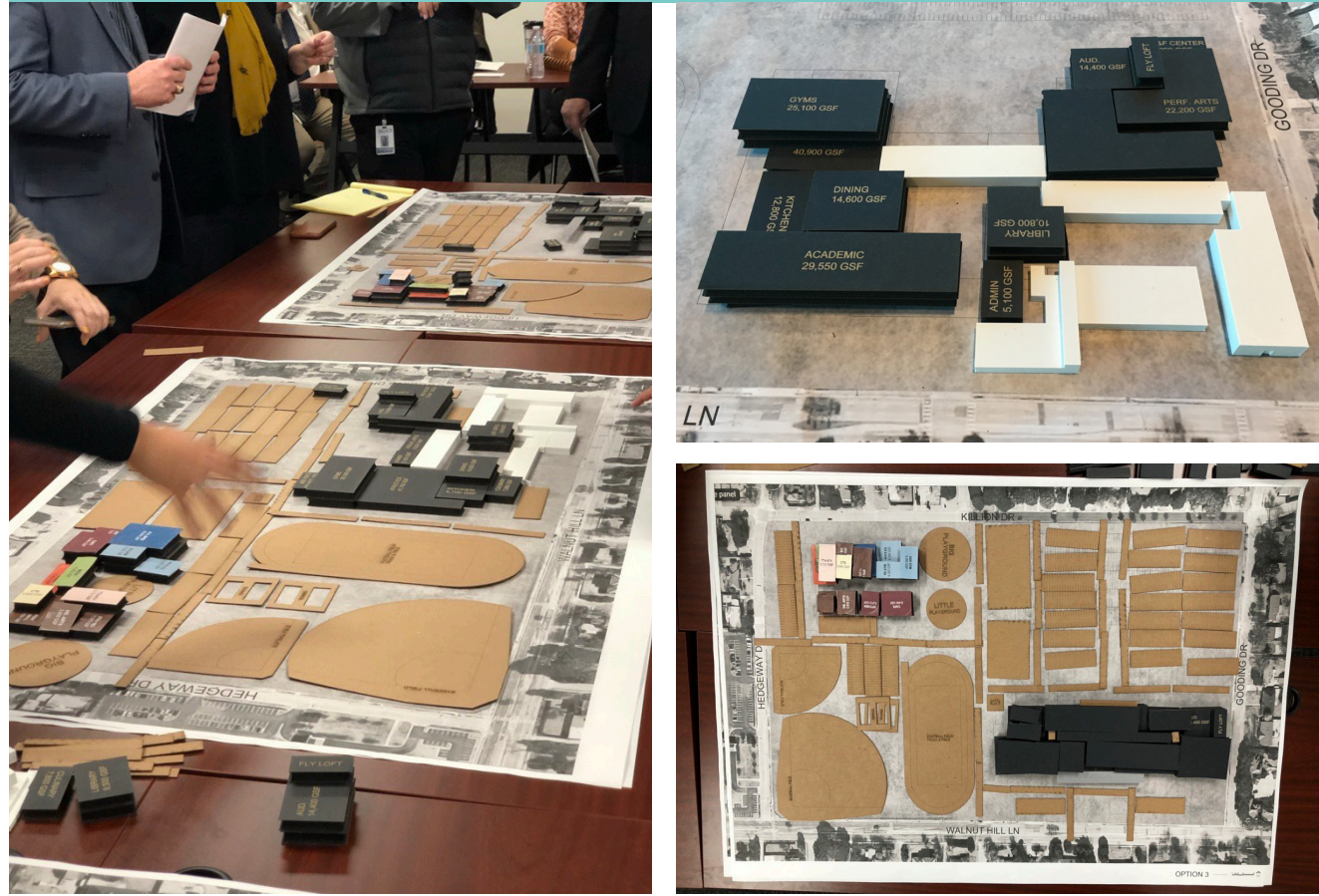
Thomas Jefferson High School

Visioning session feedback emphasized the need to create an Innovative Educational Environment.

Studying Potential Solutions Addition and Renovation or Total Rebuild?



Multiple design options were explored to save district resources while creating a solution that met the district's ambitious goals.



Value

Every day crossed off the calendar chipped away at the compressed timeline — but excellent design and innovation requires processes that can't be skipped. Results from visioning sessions were posted for comment, open board meetings ensured all opinions were heard and validated, and the community

was invited to collaborate throughout the design to ensure a unified direction and sense of ownership.

By hosting multiple visioning groups, diverse voices were heard during planning and design, creating a holistic vision for the campus.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Final Site

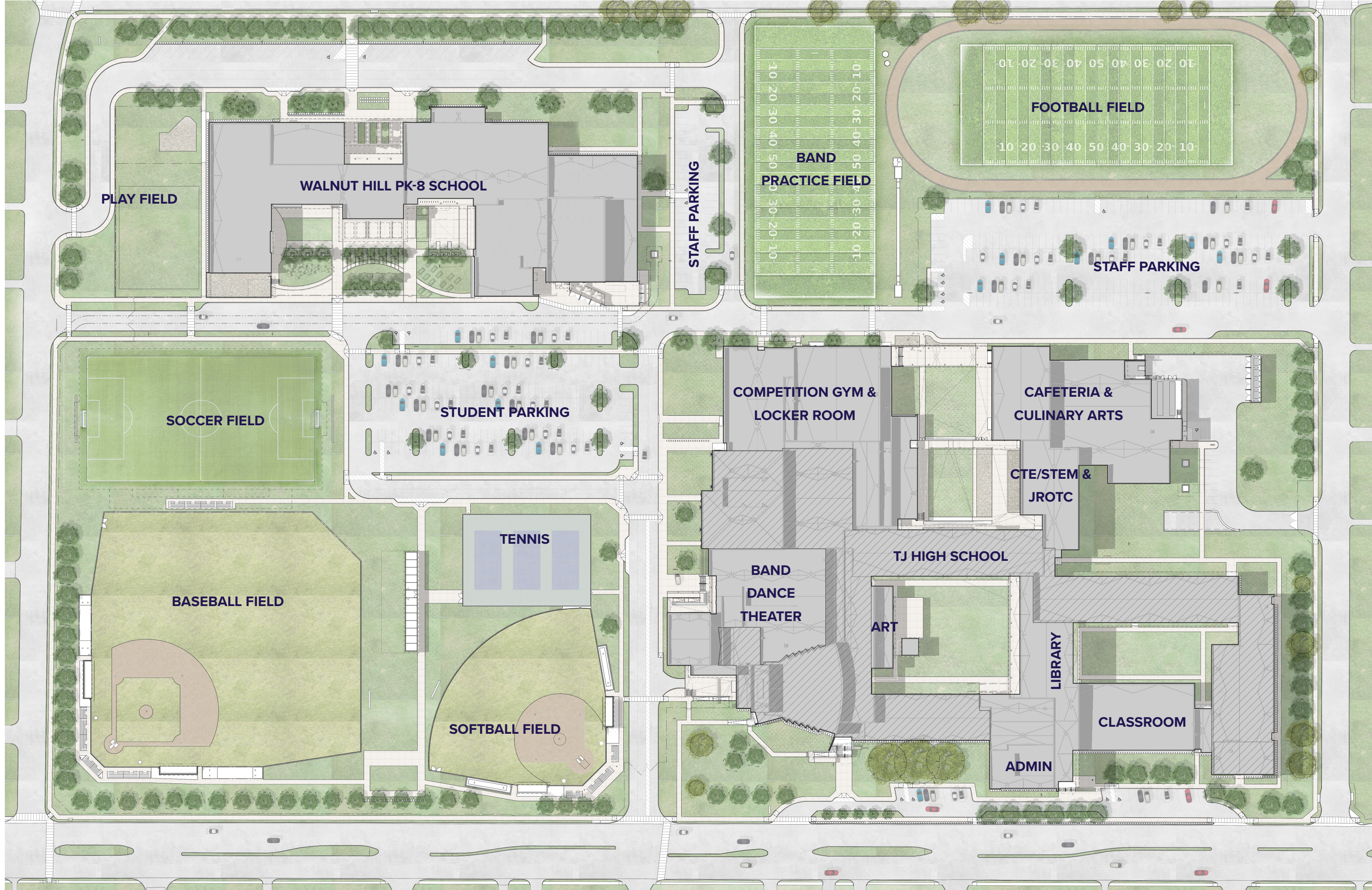


Previous Existing Sites



Site after the Tornado





Site Plan



Physical Attributes

Thomas Jefferson High School

To provide a welcoming, home-like environment, this project had to ascend beyond traditional architecture. The mid-century modern aesthetic was embraced and made consistent within the design of the new construction of both buildings. The public facing high school entry of Thomas Jefferson High School is branded to honor the active alumni and unify existing students with a strong identity. The student, faculty, and after-hours entry is a true gateway.

An iconic canopy frames the campus lawn. Directly adjacent to the multi-purpose dining hall, the competition athletics center and media center are designed to form the true heart of the campus. Its sloped grade is taken advantage of to create the foundation for a natural amphitheater. Contrasting the community courtyard, a fully enclosed learning courtyard provides space for individuals and groups of all sizes to collaborate on projects.

Walnut Hill International Leadership Academy

The Walnut Hill PreK-8 International Leadership Academy (WHILA) had the same goals of inclusion and connection but required a less permeable perimeter to ensure a feeling of safety for the young students. The double height library acts as a town square with curtainwall glazing and a tall canopy extending to a multi-functional outdoor learning environment. The maker space extends into the library from the second floor.



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT



Community Context

The district's innovation did not stop at this campus. A block away, the original Walnut Hill Elementary School was transformed into a career academy. The innovative programs within this small circle of Northwest Dallas went head-to-head with many adjacent private schools. The precedents set here have informed the district's facility standards across the rest of the city and serve as a model for inspiration for surrounding districts.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT



Inspiring and Motivating

The process of rebuilding after the devastating tornado showed the resilience of the diverse community and innovative district to persevere and evolve through tragedy.

The quality of the learning environment is meant to inspire students for what is possible in their future. The high school is modeled after a collegiate campus, with various outdoor community and learning environments and flexible interior spaces that students can own and learn at their own pace and style. The interior finishes and design communicates trust of the students to care for a quality environment.

Within the Walnut Hill International Leadership Academy PreK-8 Academy, a combination of

grand interior volumes and architectural elements combined with smaller scale zones inspire students to look beyond their typical experiences while maintaining a feeling of home. Accessible, hands-on maker spaces, garden beds, and student-driven collaboration spaces make learning tangible.

Innovation

To create shared purposes throughout the school, save money, and create equity, a dual-sided stage connects the Walnut Hill International Leadership Academy cafeteria with the gym for expanded seating and a theater in the round experience.

A learning stair through the Thomas Jefferson High School media center connects the floors and provides informal space for socialization and study.



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT



Fostering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

A strong brand identity for the schools, shared spaces for student mentoring between grade levels, and common project-based and collaboration areas give equal opportunity for all students. Being a school of choice, any student from across the district can apply to attend.

The campus welcomes a diverse neighborhood population with a historic auditorium, large multi-purpose dining and athletic spaces, and outdoor gathering areas. Families are able to bring their children of all ages to a single campus.

Sustainability & Wellness

A compact footprint for Walnut Hill International Leadership Academy made the best use of the tight site and increased energy efficiency. Care was taken to salvage as many portions of Thomas Jefferson High School as possible to reuse resources and reduce waste. The project meets all requirements for TxCHPS (Texas Collaborative for High Performance Schools).

Accessibility to the outdoor green spaces both physically and visually is prioritized across the campus, provided by shaded windows. Daylight extends into each common space and learning environment. Raised planter beds, walking paths, and outdoor dining increase connection to nature. Practical safety measures as well as design elements that increase a feeling of safety are incorporated throughout.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Walnut Hill International Leadership Academy



LEVEL 1



LEVEL 2

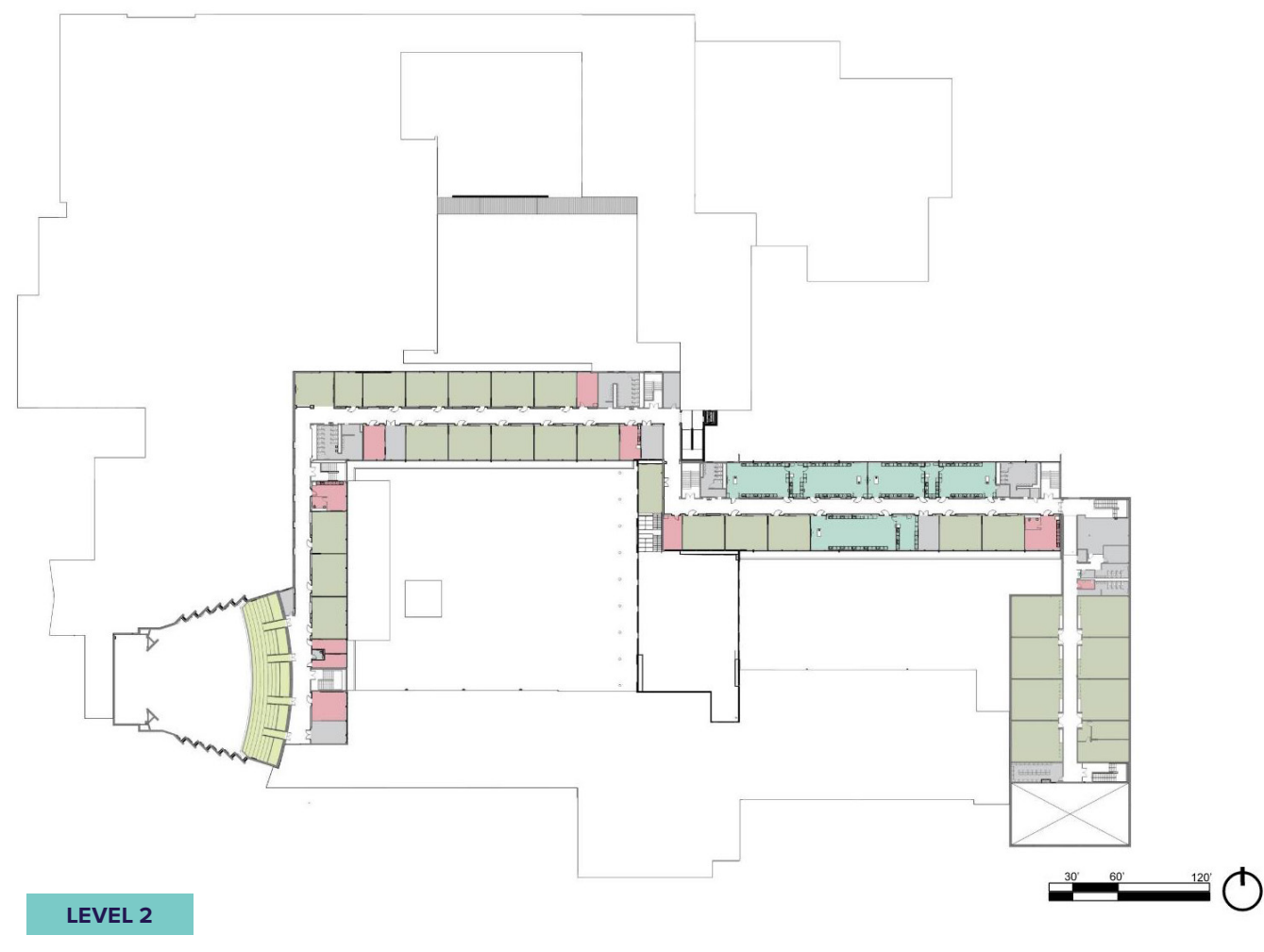


PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Thomas Jefferson High School



LEVEL 1



LEVEL 2

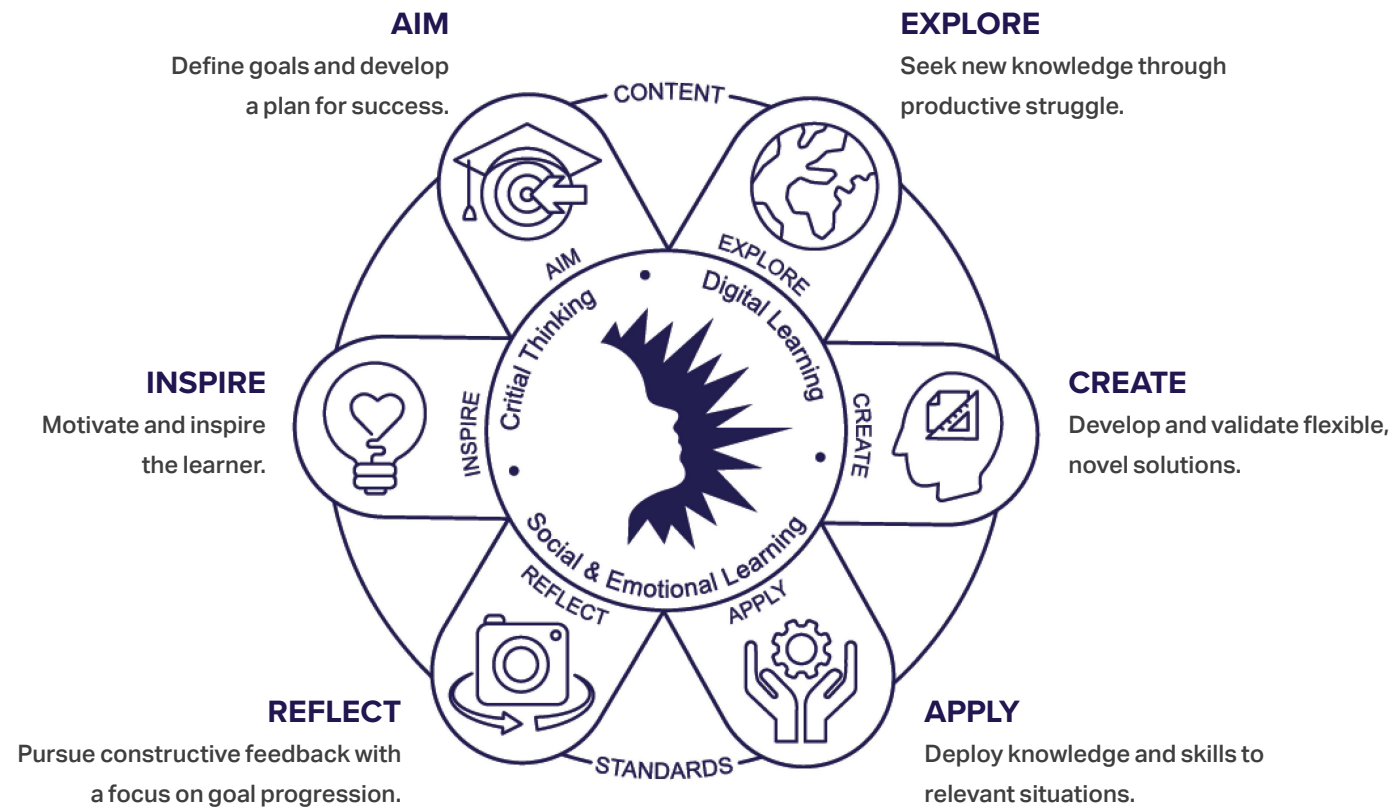
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|---|--|
| ADMIN | JRTOC |
| ATHLETICS | LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER |
| COMMUNITY | PERFORMING & VISUAL ARTS |
| CTE | SCIENCE LAB |
| FOOD SERVICES | SPECIALIZED CLASSROOM |
| GENERAL CLASSROOM | SUPPORT |

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| ADMIN |
| CTE |
| GENERAL CLASSROOM |
| PERFORMING & VISUAL ARTS |
| SCIENCE LAB |
| SUPPORT |

EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT



Dallas ISD Learning by Design Framework
Designed Just for You



FRAMEWORK COMPONENT	INSPIRE	AIM	EXPLORE	CREATE	APPLY	REFLECT
DESCRIPTION	MOTIVATE AND INSPIRE THE LEARNER	DEFINE GOALS AND DEVELOP A PLAN FOR SUCCESS	SEEK NEW KNOWLEDGE THROUGH PRODUCTIVE STRUGGLE	DEVELOP AND VALIDATE FLEXIBLE, NOVEL SOLUTIONS	DEPLOY KNOWLEDGE OF SKILLS TO RELEVANT SITUATIONS	PURSUE CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK WITH A FOCUS ON GOAL PROGRESSION
BEST PRACTICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Differentiation, scaffolding ■ Relevance, authenticity ■ Communication ■ Culture, environment, professional ethics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Differentiation, scaffolding ■ Goal setting, autonomy, entrepreneurship ■ Communication ■ Culture, environment, professional ethics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communication ■ Culture, environment, professional ethics ■ Digital Learning ■ Small group instruction ■ Critical analysis, inquiry, research ■ Problem-solving, creativity, innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communication ■ Culture, environment, professional ethics ■ Collaboration ■ Digital Learning ■ Small group instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Relevance, authenticity ■ Communication ■ Culture, environment, professional ethics ■ Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communication ■ Culture, environment, professional ethics ■ Assessment, formative feedback ■ Reflection, growth mindset ■ Problem-solving, creativity, innovation

Educational Vision & Goals

Dallas ISD believes learners are creators. They should explore by seeking new knowledge through productive struggle and develop and validate flexible, novel solutions. Critical thinking, digital learning, and social and emotional learning are district pillars for implementing a strong vision in their Learning by Design framework.

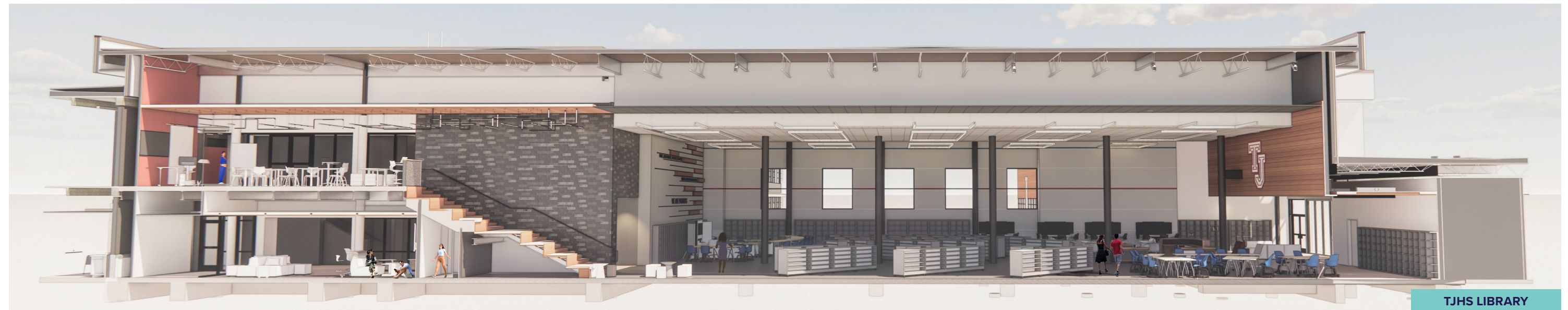
The International Baccalaureate program focuses on developing students' critical thinking skills, fueling their creativity and curiosity, and strengthening their confidence and skills so that they can discover their passions and become the global leaders of tomorrow. Supportive risk-taking, inquiry, reflection, open-mindedness, critical thinking, and effective communication are prioritized. Digital literacy and STEM skills are integrated throughout the curriculum.

EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

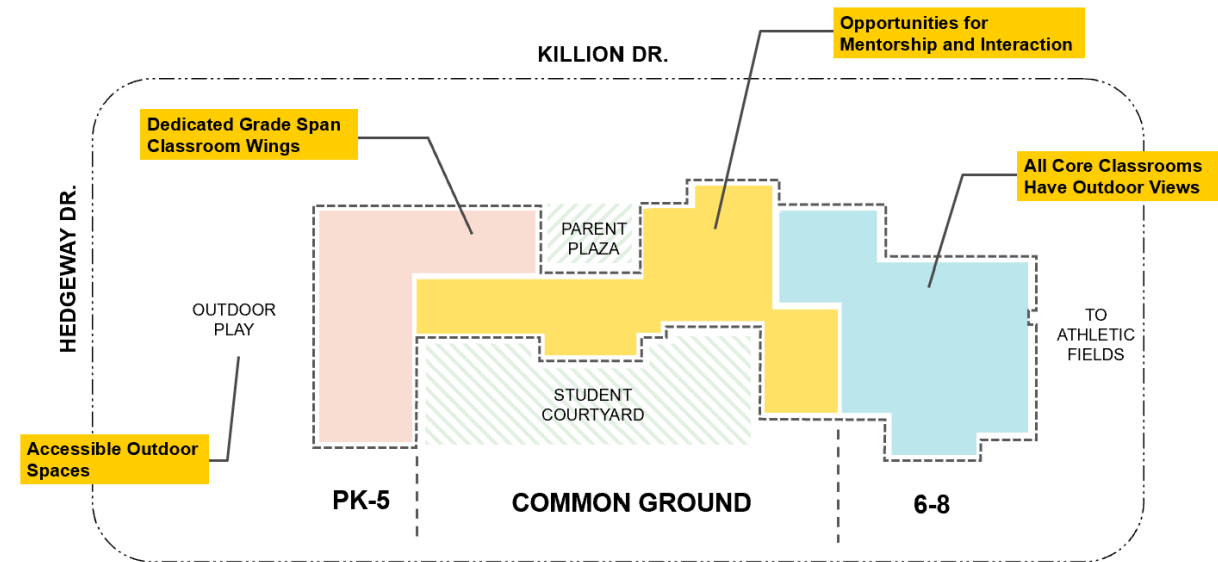
The Environment Supports the Curriculum

Flexible, multi-purpose, and comfortable furniture supports collaborative and autonomous learning. Interactive tools and virtual learning opportunities are provided in the classroom and libraries. Each student is provided with an electronic device for use throughout the day and at home. Colors, materials, and textures facilitate creativity and collaboration and are in line with brain-based learning research.

Locating grades PreK-12 on a single site allows for shared resources to elevate learning opportunities for all students.



EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT



Supporting a Variety of Learning and Teaching Styles

Interactive, multi-purpose displays in open learning hubs, mobile furnishings, and wireless presentation technology allow for adaptable teaching and learning. Access to digital resources and a learning management system provides students, parents, and staff access to learning applications, online content, and goal setting in an individual or group setting at the student's pace.



Adaptable and Flexible

Collaborative spaces, classrooms, makerspaces, and common spaces are equipped with integrated technology and flexible furniture to be able to transform the space for the student or curriculum need. Whether a small group study, independent learning, large group project, or traditional classroom format, each classroom can be tailored for the specific need. This creates a holistic design — a space that can evolve and change over time to keep up with changes in the future.

EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT



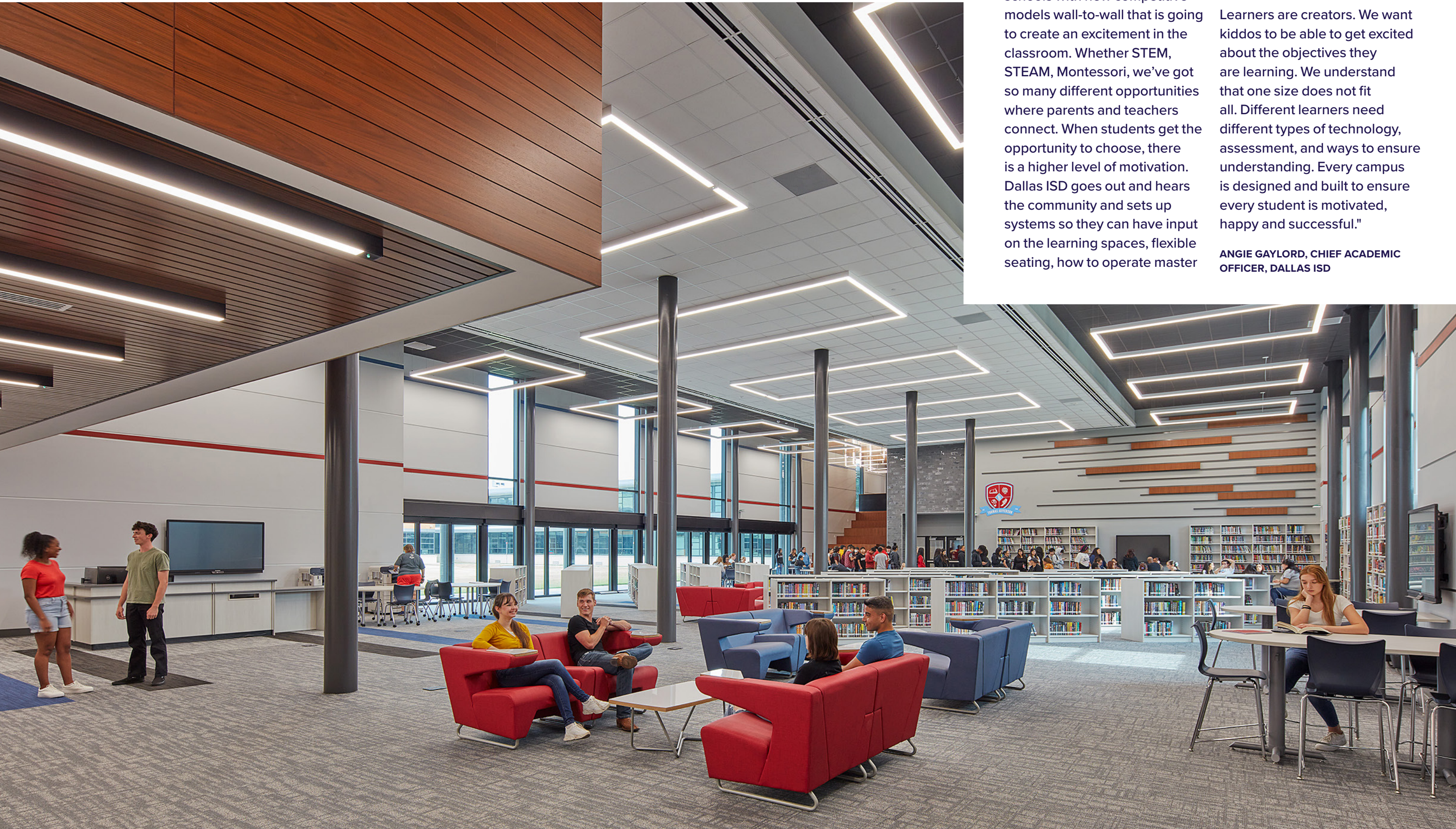
Innovative Aspects of the Educational Environment

Transparency and flow between learning spaces and the outdoors was integrated throughout the design to provide an expansive, inspirational, and socially connected environment underscoring the power of place.

A dual sided stage connects the Walnut Hill International Leadership Academy cafeteria with the gym for expanded seating and a theater in the round experience. A learning stair through the Thomas Jefferson High School media center connects the floors and provides informal space for socialization and study.



EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT



"Our office has a north star around designing neighborhood schools with new competitive models wall-to-wall that is going to create an excitement in the classroom. Whether STEM, STEAM, Montessori, we've got so many different opportunities where parents and teachers connect. When students get the opportunity to choose, there is a higher level of motivation. Dallas ISD goes out and hears the community and sets up systems so they can have input on the learning spaces, flexible seating, how to operate master

schedules and operate work tasks that they are given.

Learners are creators. We want kiddos to be able to get excited about the objectives they are learning. We understand that one size does not fit all. Different learners need different types of technology, assessment, and ways to ensure understanding. Every campus is designed and built to ensure every student is motivated, happy and successful."

ANGIE GAYLORD, CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER, DALLAS ISD

RESULTS OF THE PROCESS & PROJECT

Accomplishing Educational Goals & Objectives

The campus allows students to be creators. Spaces outside of the classroom walls are equipped with flexible furnishings and technology. At Thomas Jefferson High School, art and STEM labs have direct access to a courtyard shared with the library, to activate the outdoor environment.

Achieving School District Goals & Community Goals

Dallas ISD continues to raise the standard as a District of Innovation through this project. Achieving a single campus inclusive of grades PreK-12 for a large student population was an achievement that enriches the strong community presence, provides opportunities for cross-collaboration and shared resources, and inspires other public-school districts for what is possible when a united group of stakeholders make deliberate steps in a clear direction.

Unintended Results and Achievements of the Process & Project

This project advanced the conversation of innovation between the district and community and spurred other initiatives such as the Cool Schools Collaboration, additional PreK-8 campuses, and a new visioning process standard based on the thorough partnership between all parties on this project.

Value & Good Stewardship of Financial Resources

For Thomas Jefferson High School, two designs were considered and priced. A complete rebuild would allow for greater design flexibility than the renovation/addition option, but when the budget required creative use of salvageable portions of the campus, the design team sharpened their pencils to connect the expansive classroom wings with a new student union and library, creating two unique courtyards – one for active learning and one for reflective study.

Combining elementary and middle school age students in a single building with shared dining, library, outdoor learning, and administration areas reduced many costs, including square footage, foodservice equipment, a single storm shelter, and support staff.

Sustainability & Wellness Outcomes

Designing beyond compliance with minimum Collaborative for High Performance Schools standards led to increased energy efficiency, lower life-cycle costs, enhanced academic performance, and an improved student experience. Students and teachers want to be on a campus that responds to their unique backgrounds, needs, and dreams.



RESULTS OF THE PROCESS & PROJECT

The Impact of the Campus on the Future of Dallas ISD.

Thomas Jefferson High School and Walnut Hill International Leadership Academy implemented new processes and initiatives for the district. From exploring the PK-8 model, to more community involvement and participation, these projects set the standards for future work.



Success of the PK-8 Model

Prior to the storm, Dallas ISD was planning to convert the existing Cary Middle School into a PK-8 international language campus as part of their 2020 bond project. The new model consolidates facilities, creates a clear pipeline for students, and allows students the opportunity to attend a specialized program from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. This model has proven successful for the district in terms of student attraction and retention, as well as facilities maintenance and operations.

Collaboration with the City

The project included many diverse suppliers on the project. Exceeding Dallas ISD's MWBE participation goal of 20%, the design team pulled partners from the district's MWBE vendor event to be engaged in the planning and design. In an effort to increase participation from diverse suppliers, Dallas ISD will host similar events to help increase engagement and reflect the growing diversity of the district's business community.

Cool Schools Collaboration

Cool Schools is a Texas Tree Foundation award winning program launched in 2016 with Dallas ISD. The courtyard was designed in partnership with this group to enhance the landscape and outdoor learning opportunities at these campuses. Thomas Jefferson High School and Walnut Hill International Leadership Academy were some of the first schools to implement this program, and it is now a goal for the district to implement it at future campuses.

Community Involvement

Traditionally, Dallas ISD involved a leadership-driven design and planning process, involving key stakeholders to make design decisions. Since this project was a result of a natural disaster and a shared community experience, they involved parents, students, community members, and staff early in design and planning. This heavy involvement from the community created a shared sense of place, and set a standard for their future projects.



"We were able to take
advantage of a tragic situation."

DAVID BATES, CHIEF OF MAINTENANCE AND FACILITY
SERVICES, DALLAS ISD