

Association for Learning Environments | 2025 James D. MacConnell Award

# THE LINCOLN ACADEMY

BELOIT, WISCONSIN





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lincoln Academy (TLA) is a transformative public charter school designed to break cycles of poverty and low academic achievement in Beloit, Wisconsin. Facing significant educational and economic challenges—including low proficiency rates, below-average ACT scores, and high unemployment—the community came together to reimagine education. Through a multi-year grassroots effort, stakeholders developed a vision for a school that integrates rigorous academics, character development and career exploration.

TLA was established through extensive collaboration with educators, business leaders and community advocates. Kids First Beloit—TLA’s founding organization—secured funding and approvals, leading to a school that has quickly become a sought-after educational option. Demand has surpassed expectations, with all grade levels at capacity and a 200+ scholar waiting list.

The 145,300-square-foot school, located in one of Beloit’s most underserved areas, was designed to foster engagement and career readiness. The three-story building maximizes space while providing flexible classrooms, hands-on learning labs and industry-focused environments like an EMT simulation lab. The design also integrates experiential graphic elements celebrating Beloit’s manufacturing history, connecting scholars to their city’s legacy.

Completed in just 17 months, the project required an innovative, fast-track approach, balancing planning, design and construction simultaneously. The result is a school that not only meets the immediate needs of scholars but also aligns with Beloit’s workforce demands. Strong industry partnerships enable dual enrollment, job shadows, youth apprenticeships, internships, and workforce certification programs in fields such as IT, healthcare and skilled trades.

Since opening, TLA has exceeded expectations, with scholars outperforming state benchmarks in English and math. The school is a community-driven model for educational transformation, ensuring scholars graduate prepared for both college and careers with the skills and confidence to lead choice-filled lives.



Diane Hendricks, a prominent business leader in Beloit, has played a leading role in creating and supporting TLA. Motivated by a desire to expand educational opportunities in her community, she spearheaded a five-year effort to bring the school to life.

While both Diane and the Hendricks Family Foundation have contributed to TLA’s success, the school facility itself is a personal gift from Diane to the city. Her philanthropic leadership—both individually and through the foundation—has helped close critical funding gaps and ensure the school’s long-term sustainability.

Diane also serves as secretary of TLA’s Board of Directors, where she remains actively involved in guiding its governance and strategic direction.

# SCOPE OF WORK + BUDGET

**THE LINCOLN ACADEMY**  
Owner

**BELOIT, WISCONSIN**  
Location

**145,300 SQ FT**  
Building Area

**K4 - 12**  
Grade Levels

**PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL**  
Project Type

**\$37.8 MILLION  
(PHASE 1 – NEW BUILDING)**

**\$10 MILLION  
(PHASE 2 – EXPANSION)**  
Cost

**FALL 2021**  
Occupancy Date

**4.2 ACRES**  
Site Area

**730 SCHOLARS**  
Capacity



## WHAT'S BEHIND THE NAME?

Scholars at TLA embody the values exemplified by President Abraham Lincoln: resilience, ingenuity, and a steadfast commitment to themselves and their communities. Lincoln visited Beloit several times during his life, delivered a public speech downtown, and left an indelible mark that is commemorated through various state markers across the city. This shared history serves as an enduring inspiration for scholars to uphold the values of perseverance and dedication that Lincoln so passionately exemplified.





THE CITY OF BELOIT: COMMUNITY ASSETS

“THE LINCOLN ACADEMY IS LOCATED IN THE HEART OF BELOIT, A CITY CHALLENGED IN THE AREA OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, YET ALSO EXPERIENCING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROWTH THAT CONTINUES TO STRENGTHEN AND DIVERSIFY THE LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY.”

Dr. Kristi Cole  
CEO OF THE LINCOLN ACADEMY



**Bridges:** The Rock River shaped Beloit, drawing settlers and fueling industry. As the city grew, bridges connected its people and commerce, reflecting its heritage and community spirit. The Hendricks Memorial Bridge honors Beloit’s past with distinctive design. The Wood Family Fishing Bridge, built on repurposed railroad trestles, includes a locomotive replica. The Beloit Trail Bridge, the city’s largest, spans the Rock River as part of a trail system, blending history with recreation. Each bridge tells a story of Beloit’s evolution, shaped by the river that first brought people here.

**Local Colleges + Universities:** The city is home to Beloit College, a private liberal arts institution founded in 1846, making it the oldest continuously-operated college in Wisconsin and was founded while the state was still a territory. Known for its rigorous academics and vibrant campus life, Beloit College offers a range of programs and emphasizes experiential learning. The college collaborates with local institutions like Blackhawk Technical College and the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater, providing scholars with diverse educational opportunities and fostering strong community ties.



**Manufacturing History:** Beloit’s rich manufacturing history began in 1858 with Merrill and Houston Iron Works, later known as Beloit Corporation, which became a global leader in papermaking machinery. Over the years, the city’s industrial base expanded, transforming it into a thriving manufacturing hub that continues to define its economic landscape. In 1885, Fairbanks Morse relocated to Beloit, playing a key role in shaping the city’s diversity by hiring workers during the Great Migration from the South. This blend of industrial innovation and cultural richness remains integral to Beloit’s identity.

**Diane Hendricks** has played a pivotal role in revitalizing Beloit through her personal philanthropic and economic initiatives and her work through the Hendricks Family Foundation. Her investments have transformed the downtown area, including several mixed-use developments that house multiple businesses and employ hundreds of residents. Additionally, the foundation has invested in initiatives like Acts Housing, which helps families achieve homeownership and revitalizes neighborhoods.



Photos courtesy of Visit Beloit and Wisconsin Historical Society (Wisconsin Historical Society, Foundry Workers at Fairbanks, Morse Co, W0125LA)



THE CITY OF BELOIT: EDUCATIONAL BARRIERS

**Identification of Need:** In 2020, Beloit was rated the second-lowest performing public school district among Wisconsin’s 420 districts. Kid’s First Beloit was formed as a response to provide an alternative option for all the city’s children.

Educational Metrics



**< 20%**  
Students reading at grade-level

Statistics initially shared via the Kids First Beloit Facebook page. ([www.facebook.com/kidsfirstbeloit](http://www.facebook.com/kidsfirstbeloit))



**70%**  
Students do not meet college-ready standards



**18%**  
Students have mastered grade-level math skills

ACT Scores



**16.7**  
Average composite score  
State average: 20.4

Universities of Wisconsin Office of Educational Opportunity Phase II Application. ([tinyurl.com/48a5f2jc](http://tinyurl.com/48a5f2jc))



**16.3**  
Average composite score among Hispanic students



**14.6**  
Average composite score among Black students

The City



**Poverty**  
**24.8%**  
State average: 12.3%

Stebbins, Samuel. “These are the worst U.S. cities to live in, state by state.” *USA Today*. May 14, 2019. ([tinyurl.com/mr3uzd78](http://tinyurl.com/mr3uzd78))



**Crime**  
**425 \***  
State average: 320  
\*Per 100,000 people



**Home Values**  
**\$85,200 \***  
State average: \$169,300  
\*Median home values



**62.6%**  
Economically disadvantaged  
TLA scholars  
2023-24 WI DPI report card. ([tinyurl.com/26r5dmb](http://tinyurl.com/26r5dmb))

**22.7%**  
Beloit residents without  
a high school diploma

**24%**  
Unemployment rate among  
16-24 year olds

**50%**  
Households defined as low or  
moderate income

Universities of Wisconsin Office of Educational Opportunity  
Phase II Application. ([tinyurl.com/48a5f2jc](http://tinyurl.com/48a5f2jc))

**50%**

**Graduates with no plans for their future**

Such as attending a four-year college, pursuing a career, enrolling in job training or joining military service

Universities of Wisconsin Office of Educational Opportunity Phase II Application. ([tinyurl.com/48a5f2jc](http://tinyurl.com/48a5f2jc))



ESTABLISHING THE VISION + ADDRESSING THE NEED: KIDS FIRST BELOIT

Developing TLA was a community-driven effort spanning over two years of research and discussions. During Phase I (2017-2018), the focus was on understanding the current state of education in Beloit, learning from other urban environments, and exploring potential solutions. Discussions about the educational landscape included the Beloit School District administration, along with business leaders and grassroots organizations. **The Hendricks Family Foundation** played a significant role by engaging **The Woodson Center** to enhance outreach and support local grassroots leaders. This phase highlighted a lack of knowledge about the current performance of Beloit’s students but a strong belief in the importance of education and the need for partnerships with educational providers.

In Phase II (early 2019), the focus shifted to exploring school model alternatives and building relationships with stakeholders interested in Beloit education. **Educational consultant** support began during this phase and led the work on the charter application development while hosting community sessions. Partnerships with local leaders and organizations, such as **Pastor Evans** and **Concerned Black**

**Citizens of Beloit**, were instrumental in organizing community conversations. Collaboration with the **NAACP education committee** and **Hispanics for School Choice** led to the development of a Latino leadership group. Structured focus groups and individual discussions assessed community knowledge and interest in school alternatives. A few other key stakeholders who supported decision-making during this phase included the **Kerry Foods CEO**, the **Beloit College President**, and the **Beloit Health Systems CEO**. By the end of Phase II, Beloit 200 approved funding for feasibility work on a public charter school.

Phase III (second half of 2019) involved ongoing communication with the community, including over 20 information sessions and the launch of a website and Facebook page to gather additional input. **The Lincoln Academy Advisory Council**, formed in December 2019, played a crucial role in hiring the chief education officer, planning and building the school, developing branding, and engaging with the community. **These launch team members served as key ambassadors and decision-makers, facilitating teacher and scholar recruitment and nomination efforts to establish TLA’s Governance Board.**

“BELOIT HAS ITS CHALLENGES, BUT THERE IS PLENTY TO CELEBRATE. WE ARE A CITY THAT WORKS TOGETHER...WE’RE INVESTING IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS.”

Lori Curtis Luther  
BELOIT CITY MANAGER (2019)



CREATE AN INDEPENDENT CHARTER SCHOOL TO EMPOWER SCHOLARS TO LEAD HAPPY, CHOICE-FILLED LIVES.

Kids First Beloit’s Vision

In 2019, Beloit 200 formed Kids First Beloit, Inc. as part of a comprehensive effort to improve education for all children.



Kids First Beloit successfully spearheaded the charter application through the Office of Educational Opportunity with the University of Wisconsin Regents.



The Kids First Beloit, Inc. board of directors approved a resolution to officially change the name to The Lincoln Academy in August of 2021.



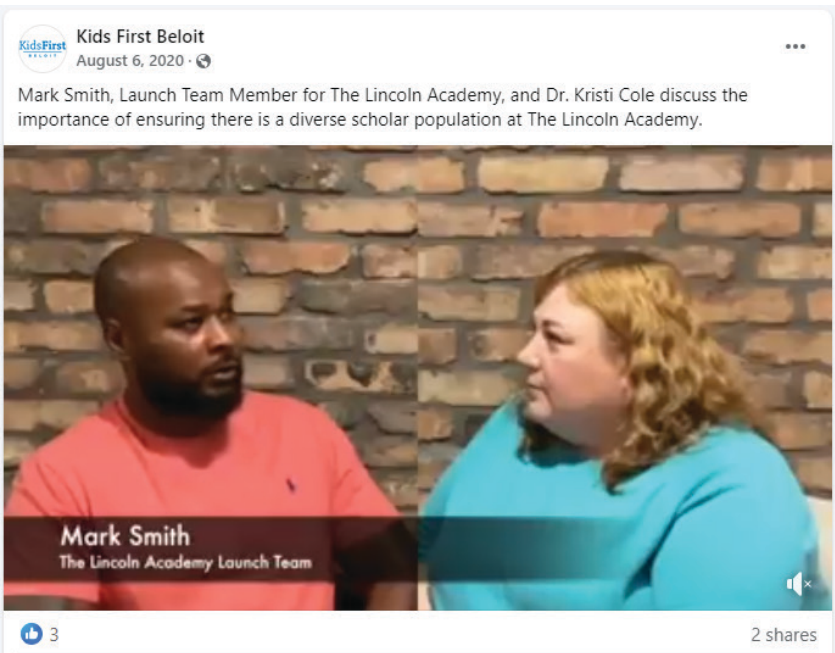


SPREADING THE WORD

Word-of-mouth communication was essential. The launch team, comprising of local church leaders and pastors, local university and technical college leaders, business CEOs, school board members, and community advocates, played a vital role in spreading the word.

During the peak of the pandemic, the newly appointed CEO for TLA, Dr. Kristi Cole, and launch team members worked tirelessly to forge strong connections within the community—particularly in underserved areas. As school construction unfolded in the background, they set up tables on sidewalks, knocked on doors, and hosted informational sessions in libraries, churches and stores. Their outreach extended to grassroots organizations, business leaders, and even local radio stations, ensuring meaningful engagement across multiple channels.

As of 2025, the school is at capacity, with all grade levels full and a waiting list of over 200 scholars.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
BY THE NUMBERS

20  
community information sessions

4  
community information sessions in Spanish

200+  
posts on the Kids First Beloit Facebook page, providing near-daily updates from January to December 2020

450  
contacts because of the Facebook page

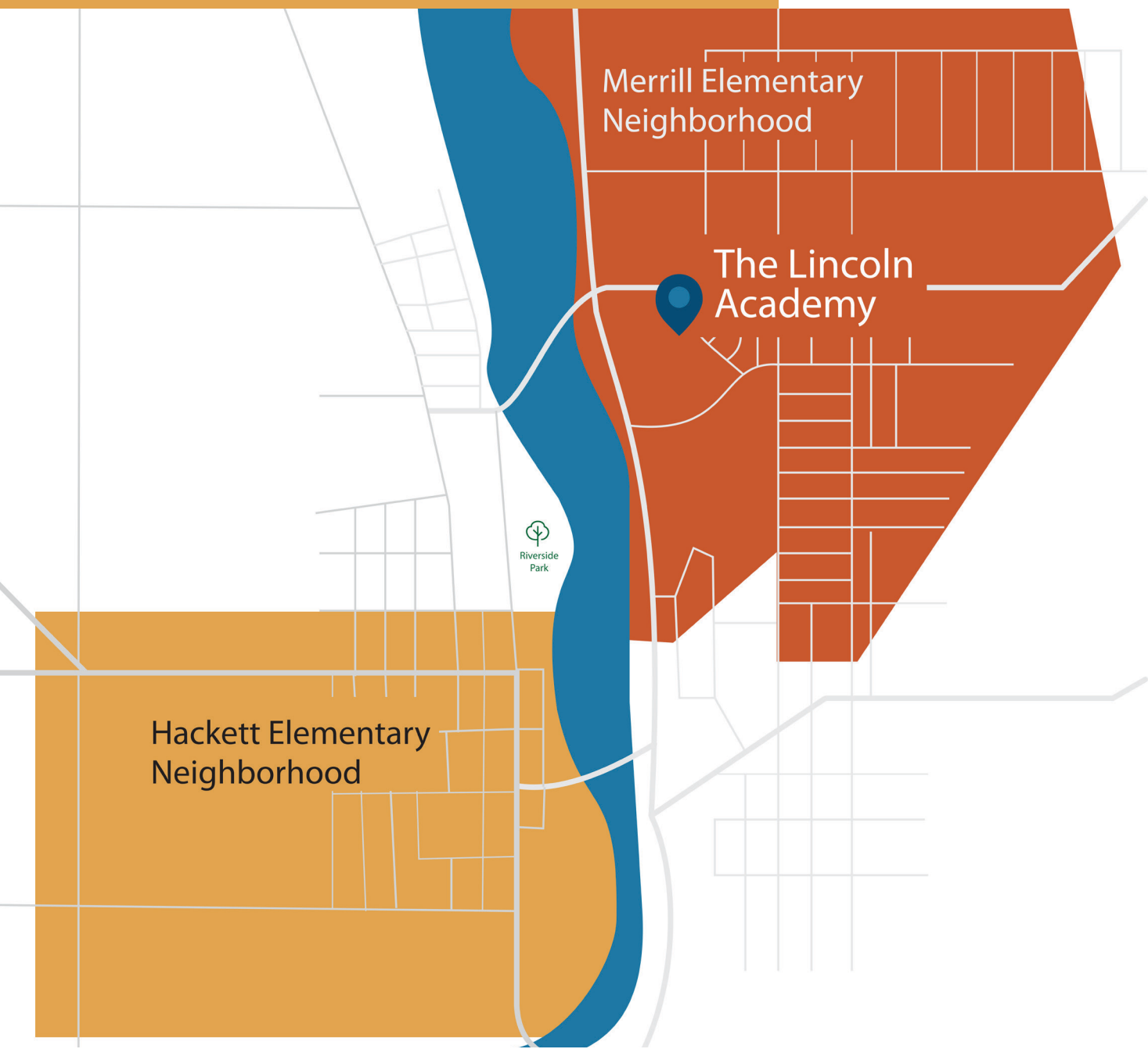
170  
surveys collected from community members

185  
petition signatures

70  
signatures through survey response







SITE ASSETS

Strategic Location

The school’s chosen location within the community provided an important benefit for two under served areas: the Merrill and Hackett neighborhoods. The site is easily accessible by bus and is close to the public library and other community-based services. This proximity fosters a strong connection between the school and the surrounding community, enhancing the support network for scholars and their families.

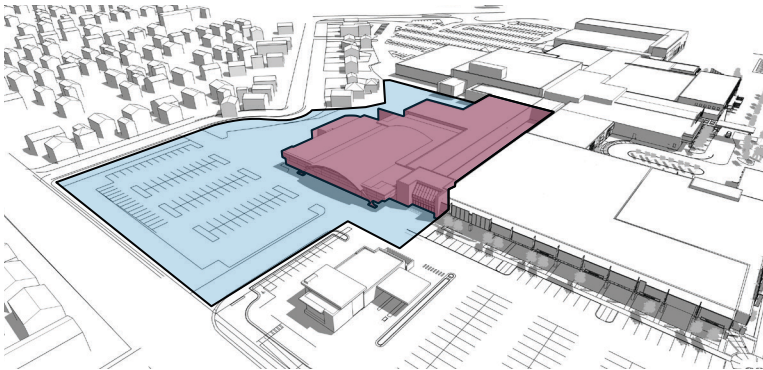
Merrill + Hackett Neighborhoods

- HUD “strategy areas” by the Beloit Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas plan (NRSA).
- These neighborhoods—one near the east and the other near the west—sandwich the Rock River and the Highway 51 corridor that divides the city.
- **Less than 75%** of residents have a high school diploma, and **only 4.1%** have any level of college education.
- Unemployment rates for those ages 16-24 are **56.9%** in the Merrill neighborhood.
- Households living on less than \$25,000 annually hover **near 45% in both neighborhoods.**

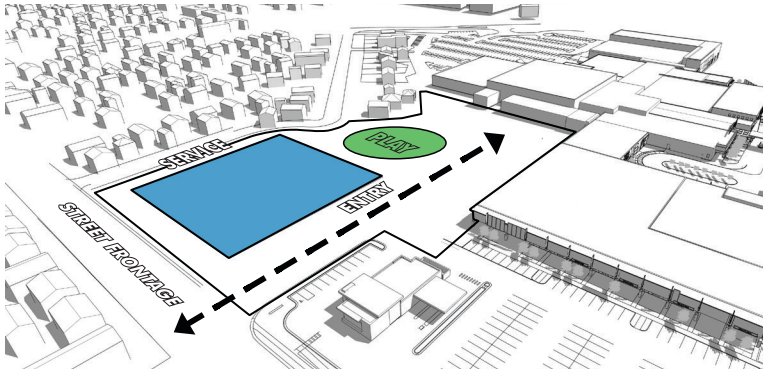




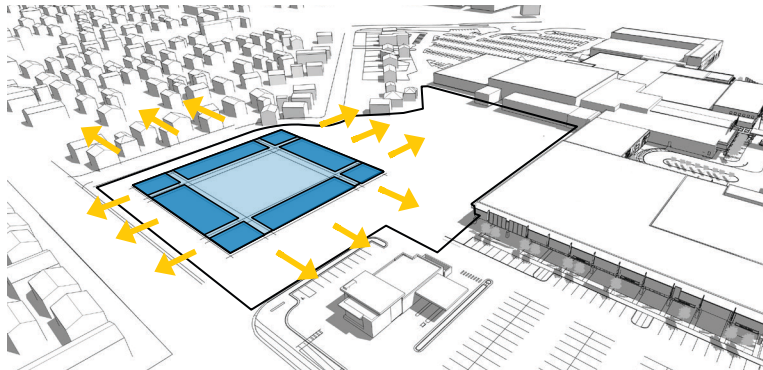
SCHOOL + COMMUNITY RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT



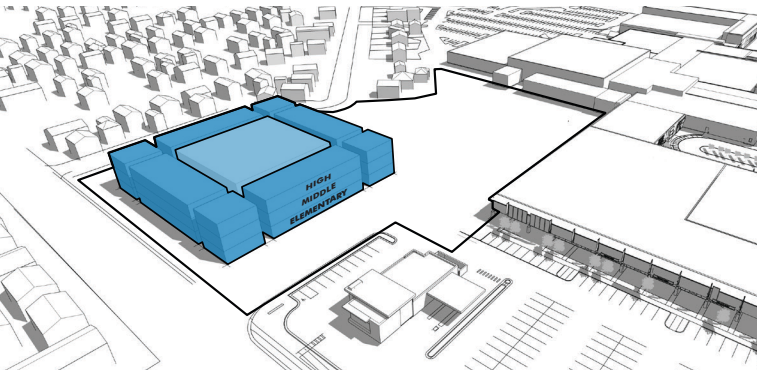
The project site is a vacant grocery store and adjacent parking area at the northeast corner of the Eclipse Center, a former shopping mall now leased to various tenants. The vacant store and adjacent space were demolished to provide enough area for the program.



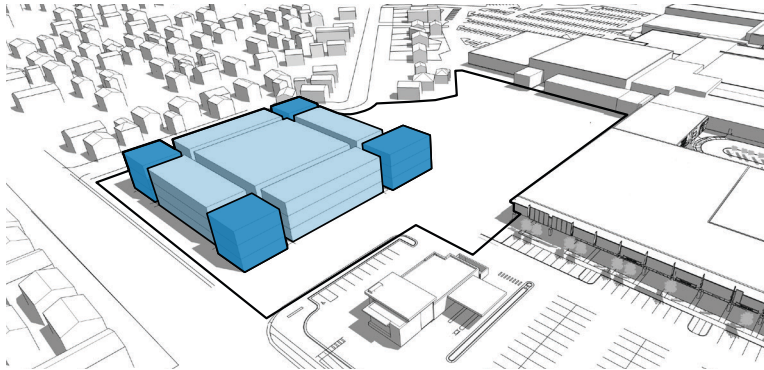
The building is positioned to the north and east of the property, allowing for site access along the west elevation and controlled outdoor scholar areas to the south, contained and sheltered by the existing building.



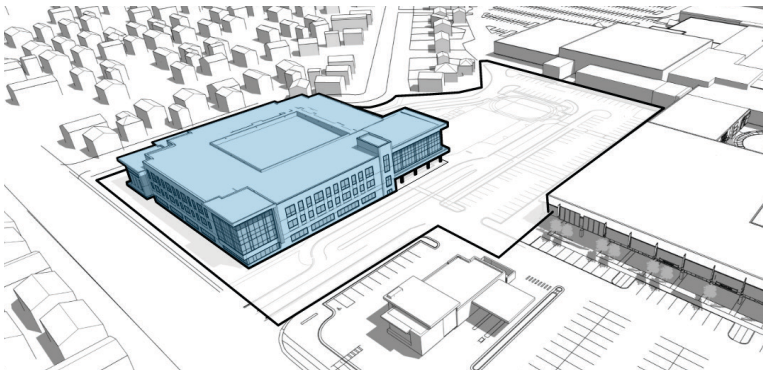
Core learning environments and exploratory curriculum spaces are located at the perimeter of the building to capitalize on daylight and views for all learning spaces.



The gym and all school assembly space is located at the center of the building. The school is organized vertically by age, with 4K-4th grade on level 1, 5th-8th grade on level 2, and 9th-12th grade on level 3.



The corners of the building create opportunities for destination spaces, such as the library media center, music, art, science labs and special education, while the spaces between accommodate grade-level classrooms.



The warm exterior of the building reflects a contemporary take on the manufacturing aesthetic, featuring stone, masonry, wood and metal panels.



Existing Project Site



The Lincoln Academy



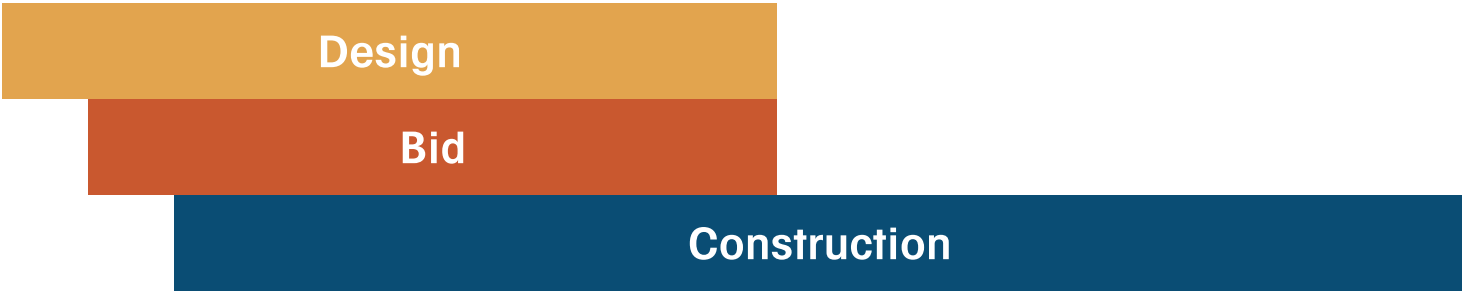
BUILDING THE VISION: A FAST-TRACK PROJECT

The design team joined the project after site selection and initial program exploration, stepping into an accelerated timeline that demanded immediate action. Inheriting a preliminary program of 75,000 square feet, the team quickly determined it was insufficient to support the anticipated scholar population and services. The final design expanded to 129,300 square feet to meet the needs of their vision, with a planned, second phase expansion of 16,000 square feet to accommodate the final target enrollment of 700 scholars.

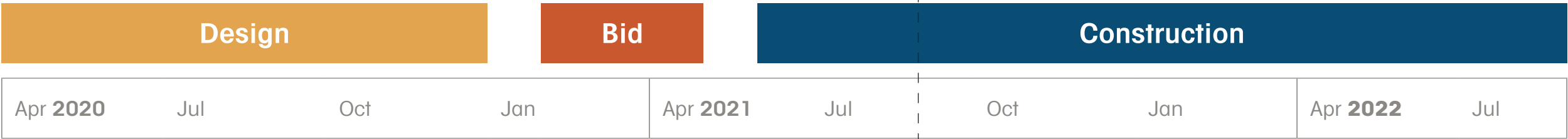
Given the urgency, programming, planning and design progressed concurrently with construction. Meeting virtually twice per week during the pandemic, the design team collaborated with stakeholders to align curriculum offerings, staffing, and scholar services with the school’s vision and mission.

**In Wisconsin, typical referendum-to-completion timelines range from 22 to 29 months, depending upon a November or April election respectively; TLA was completed in just 17 months.** Working closely with the construction manager and design/build MEP contractors, the design team developed six bid packages, requiring daily design, planning, implementation, construction and coordination meetings.

The Lincoln Academy (17 months)



Typical referendum-to-completion – April referendum (29 months)



PROJECT CHALLENGES

**Tight Site Constraints:** A compact, three-story design maximized the four-acre site while accommodating shared public use and traffic control.

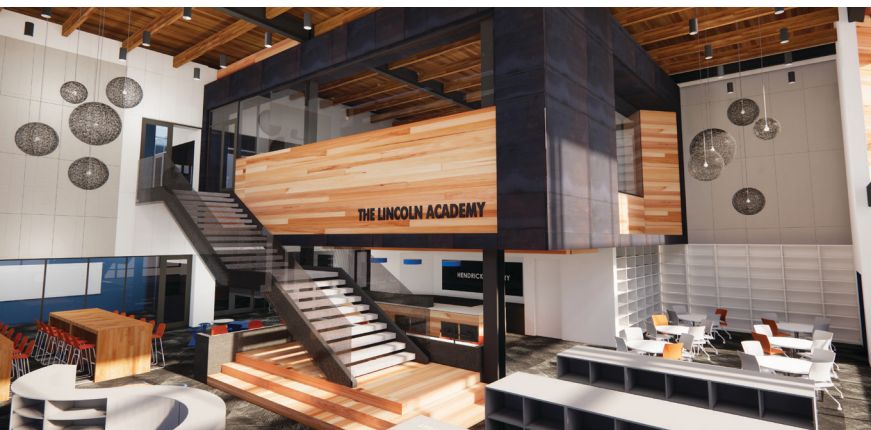
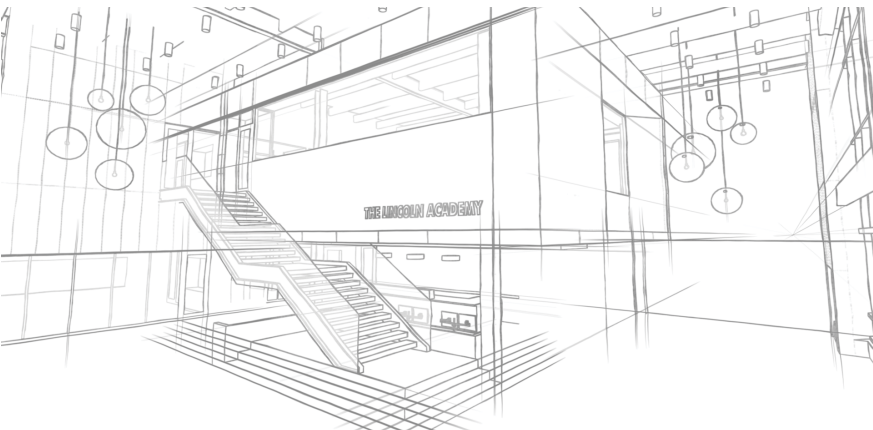
**Site Layout:** The entrance shifted west to reduce traffic impact, with service and bus circulation on the east and scholar outdoor spaces to the south.

**Shared, Sloped Site:** Demolishing a vacant grocery store created space on a site shared with a mall, bank and government building.

**Design for Future Adaptability:** Most of the TLA staff had yet to be hired, so a flexible design ensured future alignment between space needs and curriculum.

**Virtual Design Process:** Designed remotely, with multiple meetings per week to integrate curriculum, staffing and scholar services.

**Built During the COVID-19 Pandemic:** The project faced material delays, on-site management challenges, evolving educational needs like touchless faucets and online learning, and measures for COVID containment.







## SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

### ADELYNN

After transferring to The Lincoln Academy as a sophomore, Adelynn found the support she needed to turn her academic path around. Once struggling with low grades and bullying, she is now headed to the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee to study engineering. At school, she immersed herself in theater, engineering, and art, and built a strong circle of friends. Through her engineering apprenticeship at Stoughton Trailers, a semi-trailer manufacturing company, she developed technical and professional skills that set her apart, earning high praise from her mentors and setting a new standard for future youth apprentices.



### A BUILDING ROOTED IN TLA'S EDUCATIONAL VISION

The Lincoln Academy (TLA) is committed to being one of the leading K-12 institutions in Wisconsin, providing scholars with comprehensive pathways to college and careers. Its educational mission is rooted in academic rigor, joyous interactions and strong community partnerships.

Every design decision—from the classroom structure to integrating industry partnerships—was made to reinforce TLA's three core pillars: **academic rigor, character development and career exploration.**

### THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AS AN EXTENSION OF LEARNING

TLA's physical layout reflects the needs of scholars at every stage of their development. The design supports the curriculum by fostering collaboration, independence and hands-on experiences.

**Low Scholar-to-Teacher Ratios:** Classes are capped at 26 scholars in K-8 and 27 scholars in 9-12, with two classrooms per grade. Each K-8 classroom has a lead teacher and a paraeducator to provide personalized support.

**Flexible Learning Spaces:** Movable partitions between classrooms provide flexibility and opportunities to collaborate. Flexible furniture such as adjustable tables, stools, ottomans, and wiggle seats offer choice and control for scholars. Group tables and SGI rooms support small group instruction, creating inclusive and effective learning environments.

**Career-focused Labs:** The school fully integrates hands-on and technology-based labs to provide industry-relevant experiences.

**Strong Community Partnerships:** Dedicated spaces facilitate collaboration between the school and local businesses, offering scholars exposure to real-world career pathways.

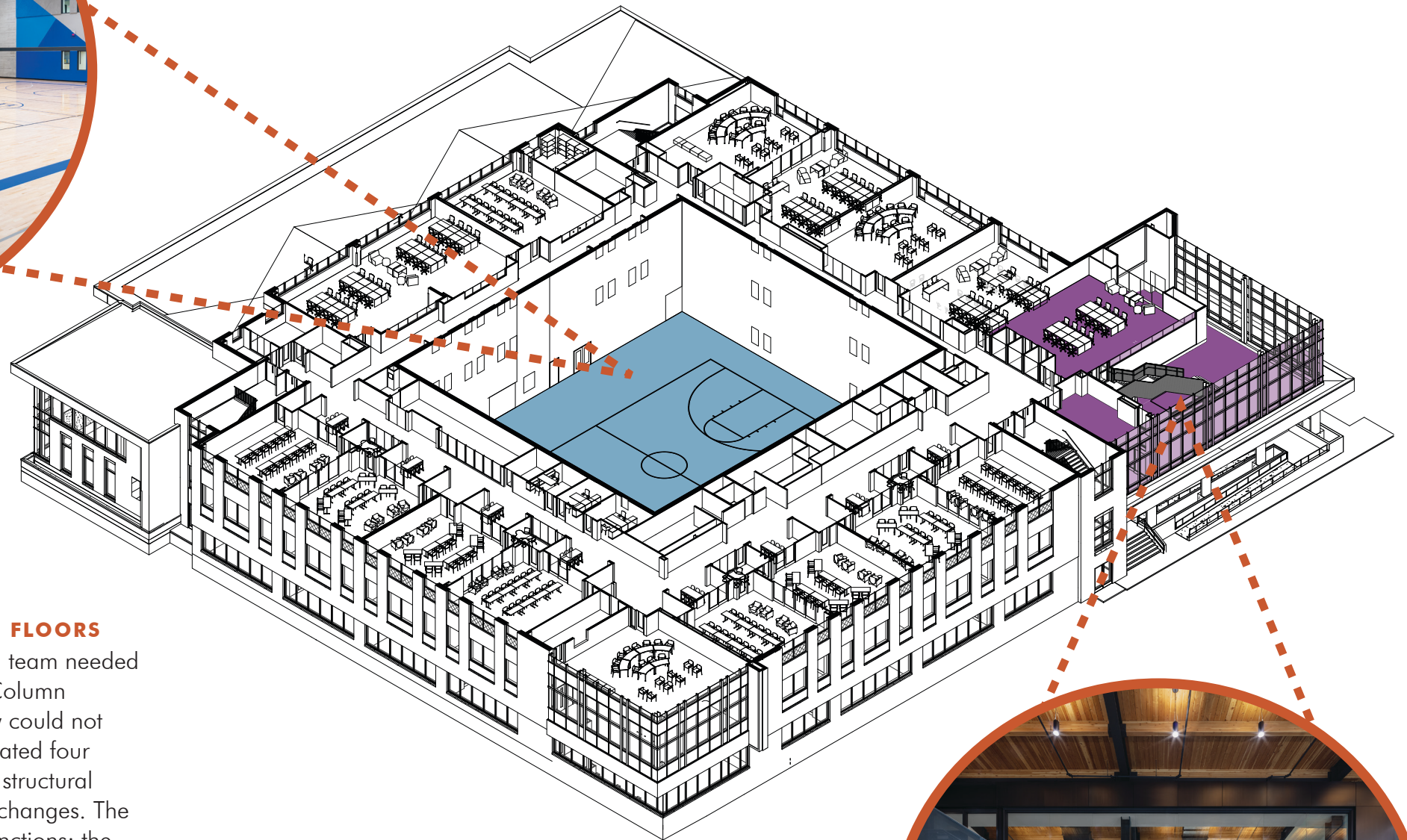




## CENTRALIZED GYM

### THE CORE OF COMMUNITY AND SUPPORT

The gym is the central hub of The Lincoln Academy, strengthening a sense of community and providing a reference point for navigation. Surrounding this core are administrative and scholar support services.



## THE COLUMN GRID

### EFFICIENCY AND FLEXIBILITY ACROSS FLOORS

Given the project's tight timeline, the design team needed to decide on the building's structure early. Column placement had to be standardized, and they could not move. The result was a column grid that created four corridors on each side of the gym, ensuring structural integrity and flexibility for classroom design changes. The building's corners were allocated specific functions: the main entrance and administration office, an art studio on the first floor, an innovation lab on the second floor, and a science lab on the third floor, each tailored to different age groups. Additional corners house music, special education spaces, and overflow administrative areas.

## LIBRARY INTEGRATION

### LAYERED ACCESS FOR EVERY STAGE OF LEARNING

The library's thoughtful placement across the second and third floors aligns with the column grid's efficiency. With a librarian stationed on the second floor, scholars can access the collection while separating younger children from high school materials. Study rooms and seating options on the third floor enhance focused learning and collaboration.





## BUILDING ORGANIZATION

Due to tight site constraints and the school's educational vision of providing a close-knit community with ample mentoring opportunities, the school was designed with a vertical structure rather than the more traditional horizontal grade wings.

This arrangement with elementary on level one, middle on level two and high school on level three created quick adjacencies, supporting mentorship opportunities, behavior modeling and exposure to interesting career pathways for the younger scholars.

**Administrative Offices:** Secure entries welcome scholars and staff into the building. Adjacent to the gym, offices for the dean of scholars and dean of instruction ensure easy access and promote a supportive environment.

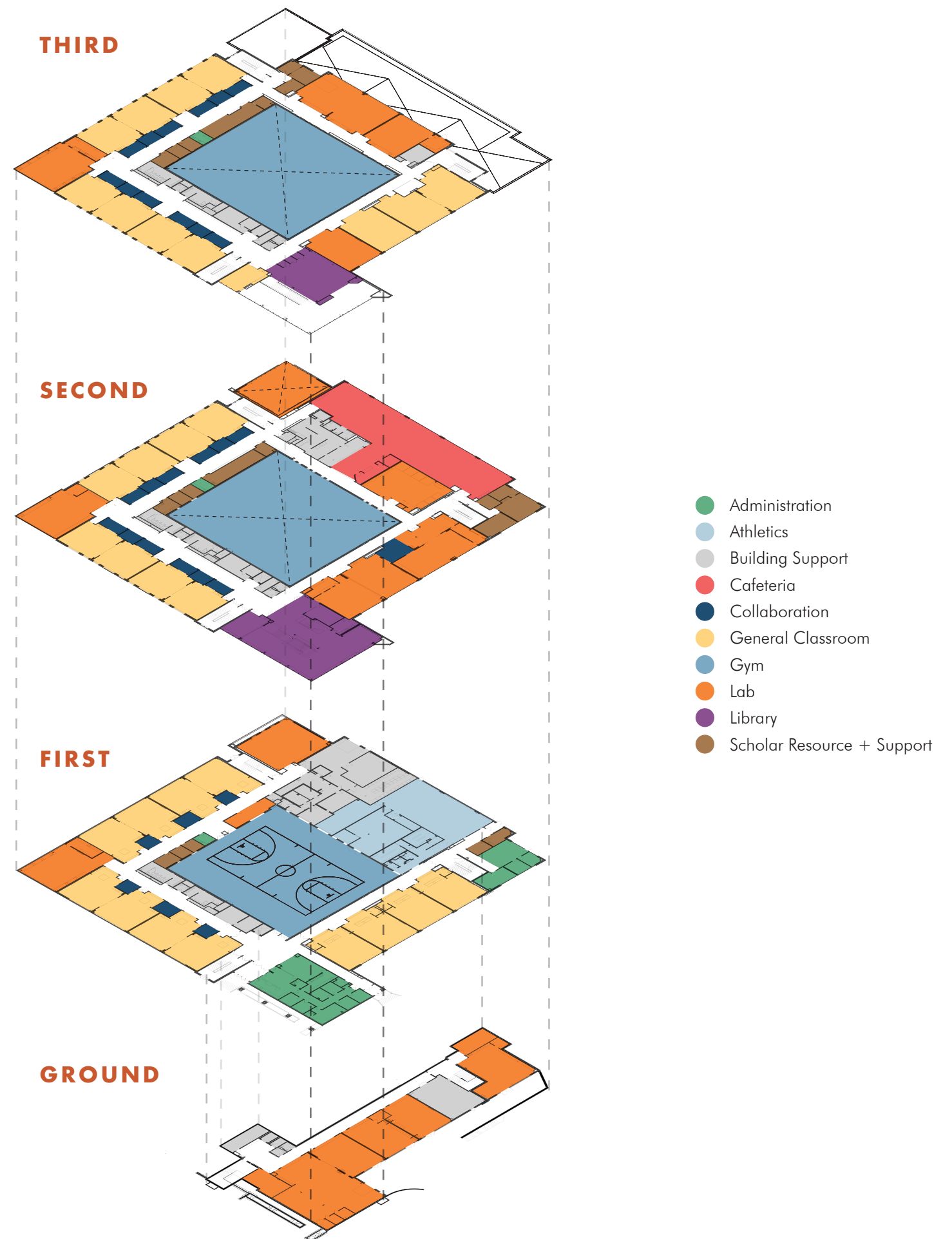
**Scholar Resource + Support Spaces:** These include the offices for the counselor, principals, social worker, special education classroom, psychologist, and the shared Stateline Mental Health partner office, offering comprehensive support to scholars and their families.

**First Floor:** Creative expression thrives with the art, music, and theater studios, alongside small group instruction spaces for English learners and the designated speech pathologist's office.

**Second Floor:** This floor features STEM labs specializing in engineering, robotics, advanced manufacturing and IT. The wellness room supports nursing mothers, and the college and career counselor's office, paired with the adjoining glass-walled readiness room, prepares scholars for their future academic and professional pursuits.

**Third Floor:** Stimulating inquiry and discovery, this floor houses medical services and science labs. The library's high school section includes study hall spaces and study rooms, designed for visibility, comfort and daily use.

**Ground Floor:** The ground floor labs support hands-on, interdisciplinary learning in design, agriculture, and the trades, emphasizing real-world applications, sustainability, and inclusive, career-connected experiences for all scholars.





## ACADEMIC RIGOR: A FOUNDATION FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

### CLASSROOM DESIGN THAT SUPPORTS ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

The physical organization of TLA supports academic rigor in a structured yet flexible and adaptable environment. Each grade level is designed to cultivate age-appropriate independence, collaboration and teacher oversight. A consistent two-classroom layout per grade supports instructional teaming and cross-classroom activities, complemented by adjacent spaces for group collaboration and small-group learning.

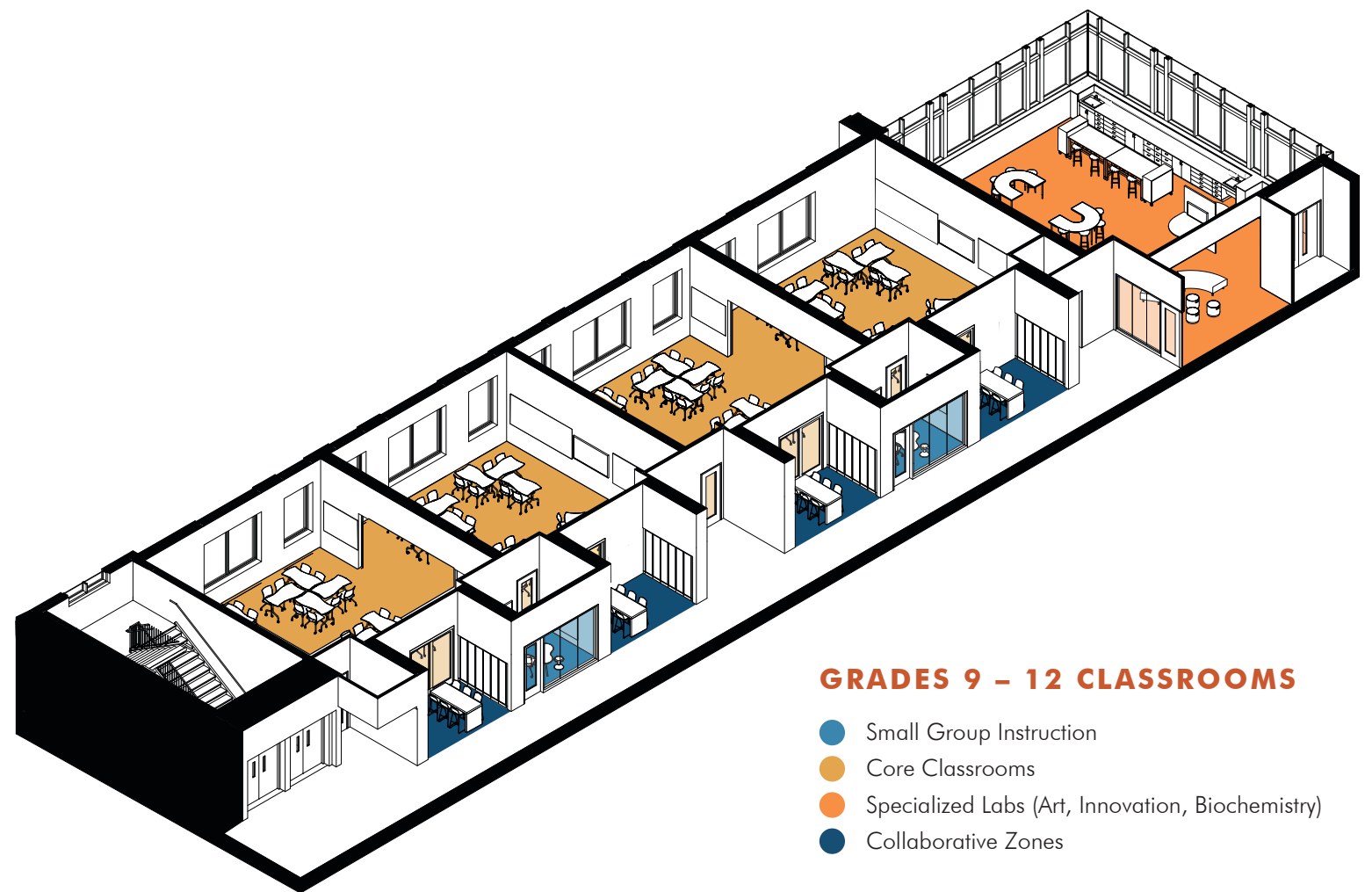
**K4–K5:** Classrooms feature integrated restrooms and cubbies designed for ease of use and comfort, supporting younger scholars' routines and independence.

**Grades 1–4:** These rooms mirror the K4–K5 layout but replace restrooms with small-group instruction (SGI) rooms, based on local data that emphasizes the value of early academic interventions.

**Grades 5–8:** These environments are designed to support small-group learning with added flexibility. Locker alcoves and breakout areas just outside classrooms provide spaces for independent and collaborative work, while shared SGI rooms between every two classrooms accommodate specialist sessions and differentiated instruction. All areas are intentionally positioned for easy teacher visibility, ensuring a balance between independence and supervision.

**Grades 9–12:** High school classrooms follow the same layout as middle school, with modifications to reflect evolving learning styles. High-standing tables and accessible locker bays promote autonomy and mobility. SGI rooms are often used for independent research and small-group study, giving scholars a choice in how and where they learn.

**Sliding Glass Doors (All Grades):** These flexible elements allow classrooms to open up for team teaching or group discussions, or close off for individual class instruction, supporting a dynamic and responsive learning environment.



### GRADES 9 – 12 CLASSROOMS

- Small Group Instruction
- Core Classrooms
- Specialized Labs (Art, Innovation, Biochemistry)
- Collaborative Zones



**An Integrated Building:** Having all scholars under one roof at TLA creates a strong sense of community and continuity. While there is appropriate grade-level separation, the school also features shared spaces designed for connection and fostering a culture where older scholars serve as mentors and role models. This unique K-12 environment allows scholars to grow together, learning not only academic skills but also empathy, leadership and responsibility—qualities that flourish in a community grounded in mutual respect and high expectations.



### CAREER EXPLORATION: REAL-WORLD LEARNING

TLA integrates career and technical education (CTE) into every stage of learning, from career discovery activities in K4 to exploratory middle school courses to specialized high school tracks. Scholars engage with hands-on curricula in areas such as construction, welding, CNC, gaming, and healthcare, often through partnerships with local colleges. Dual credit opportunities, internships and youth apprenticeships prepare scholars to graduate career- or college-ready.

### TECH-FOCUSED LABS (UPPER FLOORS)

Tech-focused labs are dedicated to digital and computer-based activities, such as programming and intricate circuitry.

**Engineering, innovation, computer science, and fabrication labs** equip scholars with programming, robotics, engineering and advanced manufacturing experience.

**Scholars engage in high-tech problem-solving** through CNC machining, 3D printing and digital design.

The **Digital Lab** with a **Chrome Depot** provides space for scholars to learn about computer science and service their peers' Chromebooks.

The **E-sports Lab** allows the e-sports team to develop teamwork and problem solving skills as well as practice for their video gaming competitions against other schools.



### SECOND FLOOR

- Classrooms (Engineering, Computer Science)
- Specialized Labs (Advanced Manufacturing, Robotics)
- Collaborative Zones





HANDS-ON LABS

TLA's hands-on labs support activities that involve larger materials, specialized equipment, noise generation and proper ventilation. These spaces reflect a strong emphasis on **experiential learning** in CTE fields, reinforcing academic rigor through real-world application.

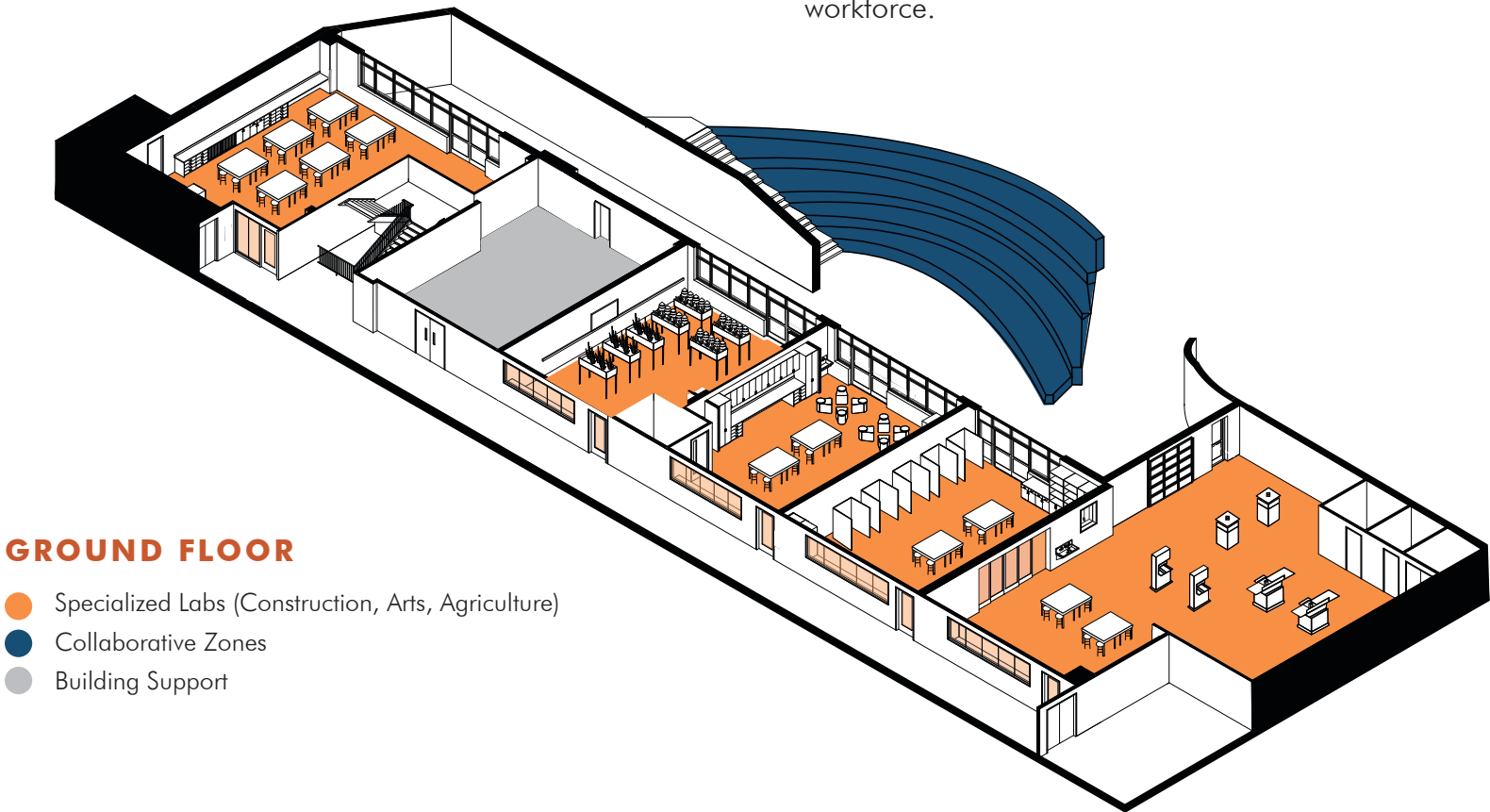
**Design Studio:** This lab supports interior design, architecture, fashion design, product design, digital photography and marketing, and landscape design. Scholars explore both traditional and contemporary techniques in glasswork and artistic expression.

**3D and Assemblage Labs:** These labs promote creative problem-solving and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration across design and engineering disciplines, including ceramics, sculpture, welding, stained glass, painting and mosaics.

**Animal Science Lab and Hydroponics Tank:** In this space, scholars care for animals and manage a hydroponics tank that supports both fish and houseplant cultivation. The lab provides hands-on experience in animal science and sustainable agriculture.

GROUND FLOOR

- Specialized Labs (Construction, Arts, Agriculture)
- Collaborative Zones
- Building Support



**Vertical Growing and Accessible Planting:** Scholars grow lettuce, herbs, flowers, and vegetables that get used in the school's cafeteria while learning about agriculture and inclusive design. Accessible planting beds accommodate scholars of all abilities.

**Incubation Project:** This initiative invites scholars to observe the life cycle of chicks, supporting early science education through direct engagement with natural systems.

**Trades and Sustainability Lab:** Focused on woodworking, metal fabrication, and sustainable practices, this lab bridges traditional trades with emerging industries.

**Outdoor Learning Spaces:** Outdoor areas adjacent to the labs allow scholars to easily move materials and learning outside and apply their learning in a natural environment.

**Medical Services Lab:** The EMT lab offers training in a simulated ambulance setting. Through partnerships with local colleges, scholars can earn EMT certification before graduation, creating a direct pathway into the healthcare workforce.

SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

ADREAN

Adrean balanced his high school experience with a career that's already paying dividends. His dedication and performance earned the respect of his employer, who not only hired his younger brother but is now fully funding Adrean's enrollment in the Mechatronics Apprenticeship Program at Beloit Technical College. Starting in August 2025, he'll earn a paycheck while pursuing college-level training in a field where he's already proven his value.





EXPERIENTIAL GRAPHIC DESIGN

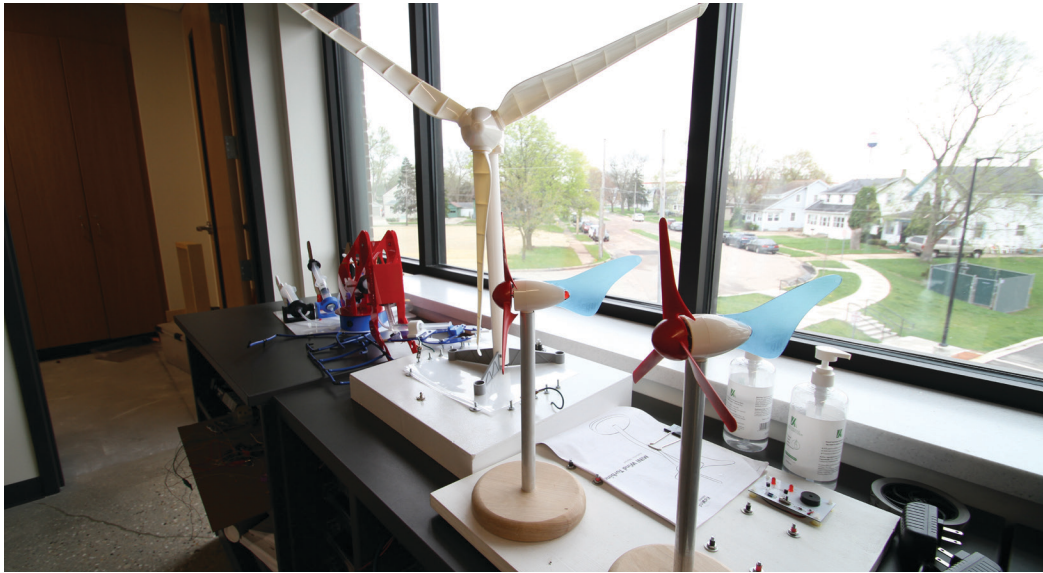
BELOIT PRIDE: CONNECTING SCHOLARS TO THEIR CITY

The school’s experiential graphic design (EGD) installations center around the theme of bridges—both literal and metaphorical. Each floor features corridor-long graphics depicting Beloit’s manufacturing history and its evolving future, bridging past and present.

Historical imagery, technical drawings and bold typography create an engaging narrative that connects scholars to their city’s industrious past.



Corridor-long murals illustrate pathways to success and mirror scholar learning journeys.



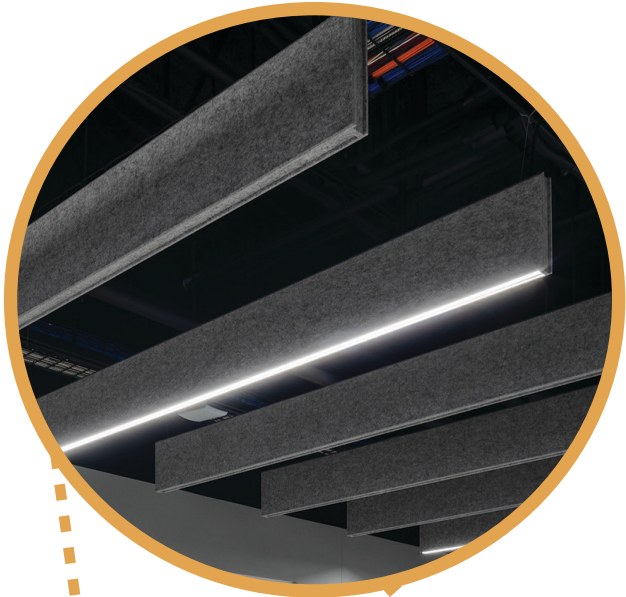


Acoustic panels and ceiling baffles were inspired by the patterns of Beloit's Iron Riverwalk Pedestrian Bridge.

JOURNEY  
to progress toward a destination

The journey of a thousand  
miles begins with one step.

LAO TZU





A REFLECTION OF THE CITY OF BELOIT

TLA's foundation is built on thoughtful yet subtle design elements that pay homage to Beloit's rich manufacturing history. Throughout the school, design elements from the Iron Riverwalk Pedestrian Bridge are echoed in the finish materials and interior architecture. These design choices create a cohesive and meaningful connection to the city's industrial past. The library, for example, uses raw, blackened steel and exposed joinery to honor the materials found within the city's iconic bridge, reinforcing the school's tribute to Beloit's heritage.

Hickory planks

Blackened steel

Exposed joinery

Exposed structural steel

"Grained" carpet pattern



### HOW THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS THE CURRICULUM

#### CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

When architecture and curriculum work together to instill academic rigor and career exploration, developing the scholars' character is the natural outcome.

The school itself is designed to **provide scholars with choices**. They have autonomy over furniture selection, which empowers them to create their own learning environments. The hallways introduce scholars to famous words of wisdom spoken by people who have made an impact on the world. The transparency into classrooms, by exposing scholars to subjects they've never encountered before, promotes **curiosity and engagement**. The visibility of mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and structural systems serves as a practical learning tool, demystifying the building's infrastructure.

The thoughtful design of the building develops a sense of **respect and belonging** for scholars as they enter. Through intentional design choices, the space creates an environment that is welcoming, educational and inspiring.



There is no substitute  
for hard work.

THOMAS EDISON

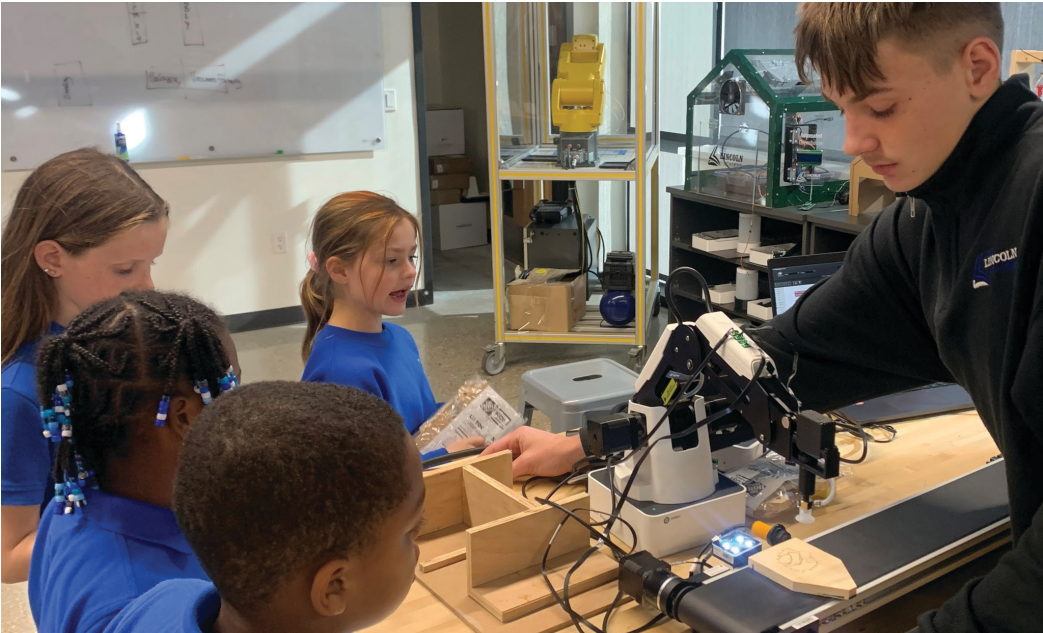




DIVERISTY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

At TLA, uniforms help bridge socioeconomic differences, promoting a sense of equality among scholars. Small-group instruction rooms are thoughtfully placed to keep scholars needing intervention engaged with their peers. Flexible furniture supports diverse learning styles, physical needs, and collaborative interactions, while a dedicated sensory room provides a safe space for self-regulation and quiet. As a tuition-free public charter school, TLA welcomes applications from children across the state, ensuring accessibility for all.

Rooted in its three pillars—academic rigor, character development, and career exploration—TLA engages scholars in presentation skills and enriching learning beyond traditional frameworks. Goal setting begins in K4 with **individualized learning plans** tailored to self-selected career paths, supporting personalized education while ensuring equitable access for all children in Beloit.



SUSTAINABILITY AND WELLNESS

Natural light plays a key role in creating a healthy and productive learning environment at TLA. All classrooms are positioned along the perimeter to maximize daylighting, which has been shown to enhance concentration, mood and overall well-being. The outdoor amphitheater provides a peaceful retreat, seamlessly integrated with hands-on learning spaces and adjacent to the playground and recess area. By incorporating nature into daily activities, the design fosters a connection to the outdoors that benefits both scholars and staff.

Sustainable Interior Finishes

- Reclaimed materials like the hickory planks repurposed for a warm, natural aesthetic.
- Polished concrete flooring for durability and low maintenance.
- Cradle-to-Cradle Silver carpet tile and carbon-neutral carpet tile, both containing 45% PCR.
- Nora Rubber Flooring, a third-party-verified carbon-neutral product made using 100% renewable electricity.

Acoustics and Air Quality

- Corridor ceilings feature felt baffles made from 60% recycled PET.
- Greenguard-certified acoustic ceiling tiles with 66% recycled content support indoor air quality.

Energy Efficiency

- High-performance glass reduces heat gain and maximizes daylight.
- LED lighting, automated dimmers and blinds conserve and minimizes energy consumption.
- Variable refrigerant flow (VRF) mechanical system that redistributes heat throughout the building prior to utilizing additional energy







## SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

### EMMA

Emma, a senior, spends every other school day interning in the imaging department at SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital in Janesville, Wisconsin. Through this hands-on experience, she's gained insight into radiology and strengthened her interest in a healthcare career. The paid internship, part of Wisconsin's Youth Apprenticeship Program, has allowed her to earn high school credit while learning real-world skills. Emma is already contributing meaningfully to patient care and is well on her way toward a future in health services.



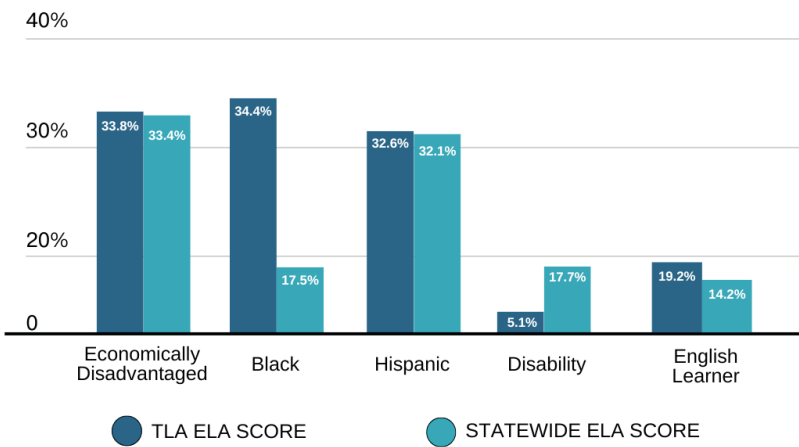
RESULTS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & MATH

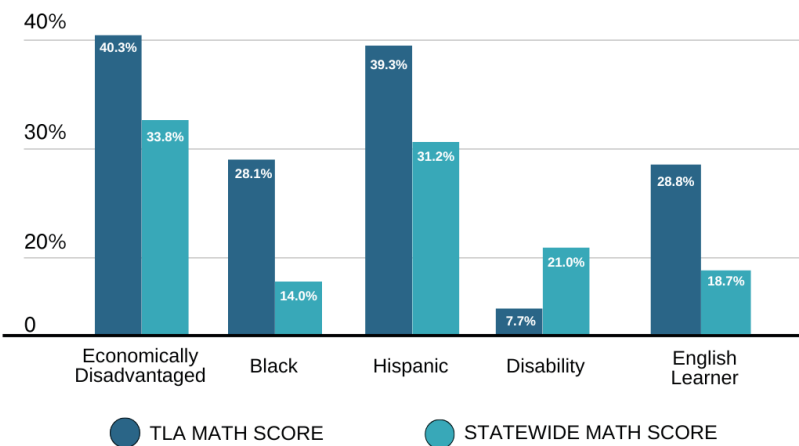
The results of virtually all TLA scholar subgroups have consistently exceeded state benchmarks in proficiency for English Language Arts (ELA) and math, demonstrating the school’s commitment to academic excellence.

WI DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION  
2023-2024 REPORT CARD

THE LINCOLN ACADEMY SUBGROUP  
ELA PROFICIENCY BENCHMARKS



THE LINCOLN ACADEMY SUBGROUP  
MATH PROFICIENCY BENCHMARKS



2023–2024 SCHOOL YEAR RESULTS

Amidst the challenges of designing and building the school during a global pandemic, The Lincoln Academy (TLA) has emerged as a beacon of future-forward education. Since its inception in 2021, starting with K4-2 and 6-9th grades, TLA has now expanded to fully enroll scholars from K-12, solidifying its commitment to innovative learning for all grade levels and providing a plan for post-graduation starting in kindergarten.



94% Attendance rate  
target goal: 95%



75% Proficiency in foundational reading skills in K5-3rd scholars | Target goal: 60%



90% of 6th through 10th-grade scholars attended a college visit



100% of 8th-grade scholars presented their Individualized Learning Plan



98% of 10th-grade scholars completed job shadows in the community



40% of high school scholars on the 4th-quarter honor role





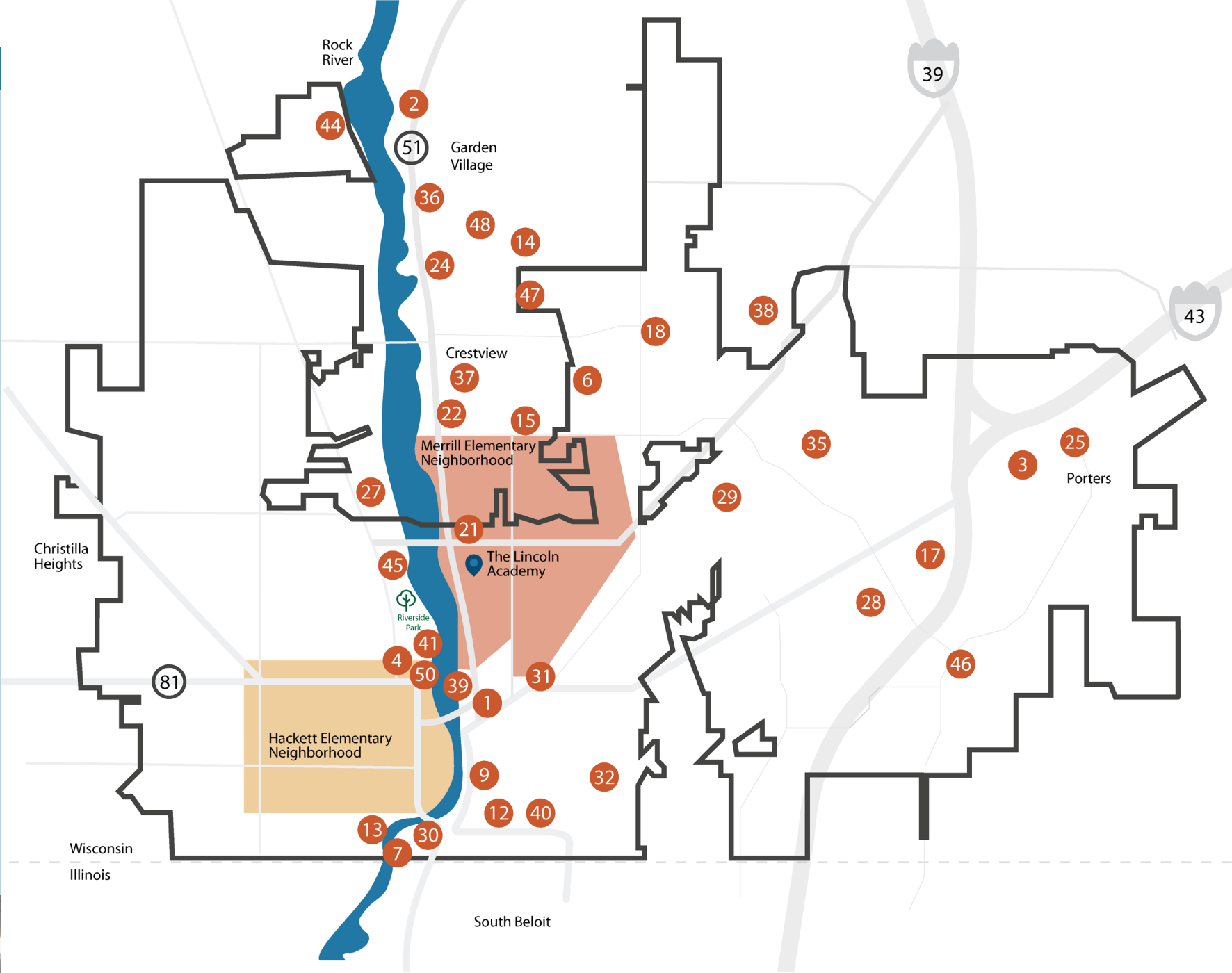
RESULTS

ACHIEVING COMMUNITY GOALS:  
INDUSTRY + EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS

TLA ensures all scholars acquire the skills and experiences necessary to lead productive, prepared and choice-filled lives after graduation. This mission aligns with Beloit’s success in attracting leading-edge employers such as Kerry Group and Rakuten Rewards, two organizations that have opened state-of-the-art facilities, creating thousands of jobs, and drawing professionals and their families to the area.

To support the local community in recruiting a skilled workforce, TLA emphasizes strong partnerships between education and employers. The school has established dual enrollment partnerships with institutions such as Blackhawk Technical College, Beloit College and the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater.

Through these courses, scholars gain experience in fields like welding, finance, IT, transportation and logistics, certified nursing assistant (CNA), and emergency medical technician (EMT) programs. By working closely with these institutions, TLA provides scholars with valuable opportunities to gain practical skills and knowledge that align with local industry needs, ultimately benefiting the community with skilled and dedicated workers.



Community Partners Throughout the Project

1. Beloit 200

2. Hendricks Family Foundation

3. Kerry Group

4. Beloit International Film Festival

5. The Woodson Center - Washington, DC

6. Concerned Black Citizens

7. NAACP

8. Hispanics for School Choice - West Allis, WI

9. Beloit College

10. Blackhawk Tech - Janesville, WI

11. Greenberg Casework Company - South Beloit, IL

12. Stateline Mental Health

13. Beloit Sky Carp

14. Badger Vet Hospital

15. Turtle Tek

16. Janesville Performing Arts Center - Janesville, WI

17. Frito-Lay Inc
18. Beloit Health System

19. JX Trucking - Rockford, IL

20. Air Force

21. Associated Bank

22. Beloit Public Library

23. Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board - Janesville, WI

24. Community Health Systems

25. Blackhawk Transport & Logistics

26. Kunes Chevrolet Cadillac - Delavan, WI

27. Hendricks CareerTek

28. City of Beloit-Beloit Transit

29. City of Beloit-Department of Public Works

30. City of Beloit Police Department

31. Fairbanks Morse Defense

32. Corporate Contractors, Inc.

33. SSM Health - Janesville, WI
34. Stoughton Trailers - Stoughton, WI

35. Autumn Lake Healthcare at Beloit

36. Riverside Terrace Assisted Living

37. Total Exteriors

38. Beloit Senior Living - The Gardens

39. Merrill & Houston's Steak Joint

40. Senz Redieske Insurance Agency

41. Rising Professionals of Beloit

42. United States Coast Guard

43. US Army National Guard

44. Welty Environmental Center

45. Stateline Boys & Girls Clubs

46. Morse Group

47. Stateline Manufacturing Alliance

48. Stateline YMCA

49. Edgerton Hospital - Edgerton, WI

50. Geronimo Hospitality Group

\*Gray text indicates partners not shown on the map