

 DLRGROUP

BOYS TOWN EDUCATION CENTER

Establishing a Spirit of Place



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & SCOPE OF WORK

Where Heritage Meets Hope: A Future-Ready School Designed to Change Lives

Set within the historic landscape of Boys Town, Nebraska, the new Boys Town Education Center reimagines learning for students who arrive with complex educational histories and significant social and emotional needs. Guided by the district's educational mission, extensive community engagement, and research-driven design, the project creates a future-ready environment that supports individualized learning, positive behavior, and long-term student success. It honors the legacy of Father Edward J. Flanagan while meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of the students it serves.

Boys Town, the design team, and the broader community aligned around clear goals: consolidate grades 4 through 12 into a unified academic program, increase access to flexible learning environments, integrate trauma-informed principles, and provide educators with the tools and spaces necessary to deliver personalized instruction. More than 2,000 hours of workshops, shadowing, student design sessions, and stakeholder input shaped these objectives and informed the final design.

Replacing the outdated 70 year-old high school allowed the team to build a cohesive learning environment on the existing site, ensuring continuity with the historic campus while meeting modern educational needs. The 110,000 SF facility includes varied classroom studios, small group rooms, learning commons, maker spaces, and outdoor classrooms, all intentionally organized to support differentiated instruction and active learning. Technology is fully integrated to prepare students for postsecondary pathways and careers, marking a transformational shift from the previous facility.

Trauma-informed design strategies drive the building's organization and atmosphere. Tunable lighting, clear sightlines, comfort nooks, controlled acoustics, and thoughtfully scaled classrooms create a safe and calming setting that enhances engagement and reduces behavioral triggers. Educator respite rooms and transparent circulation routes further support staff wellbeing and supervision.

The design celebrates Boys Town's heritage while elevating student voice. Student artwork, symbolic graphics, and intentional material choices connect the learning environment to the school's identity and foster a sense of ownership and belonging.

The new Education Center has already strengthened educational outcomes, improved student engagement, and reinforced the district's commitment to providing a stable, supportive, and academically rigorous environment. Boys Town has seen a significant rise in test scores, unprecedented levels of teacher retention and satisfaction, and vast improvement in behavioral incidents. Rooted in deep community collaboration and aligned with the school's mission, the facility stands as a model for how design can transform learning for students who need it most.

“We don't all come from the same place, we come from all over America, and we come from all walks of life. We're from all economic statuses, all races, all religions. That means every person is going to need a different style of education. Every person is going to need a different style of relationship. Having a space and an environment that is adaptable to that student and to that teaching style allows for a lot more opportunity and a lot more success.”

— Boys Town Student



BUDGET / PROJECT DATA

Boys Town Education Center

DISTRICT NAME

Boys Town

CITY/ STATE

Boys Town, NE

OCCUPANCY DATE

8/1/2023

GRADES SERVED

4-12

PROJECT SIZE

110,000 SF

STUDENT CAPACITY

450

SITE AREA

4 Acres

GROSS AREA IN SF

110,000

PER PUPIL SF

244

TOTAL COST

\$46,000,000



The more than 2,000 hours of feedback and visioning input that informed the planning and design for the new Education Center are highlighted below.

● ● ● ● Various Workshops and Stakeholder Participation

TIMELINE	2020				2021				2022		
	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN- FEB	JUNE	AUG	OCT- DEC	OCT	MAY- JULY	AUG
ACTIVITIES	Kickoff & Virtual Workshop 1	Virtual Workshop 2-4	Virtual Workshop 5	Workshop 6-7		Existing High School Demolition Begins		Student Engagement	Student Engagement	Teacher Engagement	School Begins
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trends in Education Teacher Interview Session Student Shadow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding Programming Site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Charrette Design Share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User Group Meeting Furniture Test Classrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User Group Meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ground Breaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Tile Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faith Art Installation Student Life Mural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furniture Training BOLD Workshop 1 Butterfly Painting BOLD Workshop 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grand Opening
STAKEHOLDERS											
CORE PLANNING TEAM	●	● ● ●	●	● ●	●		●				●
EDUCATORS	● ●			● ●	● ●	●	●	●		● ● ● ●	●
STUDENTS	●				● ●		●	●	● ●		●
ALUMNI	●						●				●

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT



“There are no bad boys.
There is only bad environment,
bad training, bad example,
bad thinking.”

— Father Flanagan



COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Who is Boys Town

Boys Town stands as a national symbol of exemplary educational care. It is the largest nonprofit organization devoted to children and families in the United States. Boys Town's footprint has grown and expanded to over a dozen locations in Nebraska, Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, Nevada, and New England. As of 2023, over 3 million children and families have been positively impacted by Boys Town programs.

The Village of Boys Town is recognized as Nebraska's only National Historic Landmark. It continues Father Flanagan's mission to provide life-changing care for children in need. The campus offers housing and residential treatment for up to 450 boys and girls at a time, welcoming at-risk youth of all ages and backgrounds. Comprehensive services

include education, residential care, research, healthcare, and a variety of community programs, which provides students with the wrap around care they deserve.

Boys Town students come from challenging circumstances, such as broken homes, homelessness, or the juvenile justice system, and are seeking support and a path to a brighter future. The students come from many different educational backgrounds and communities across the country, with many specialized educational needs, including individual education plans (IEP). Personalized support and educational plans empower students to overcome challenges and achieve success at Boys Town.

Boys Town History

Founded in 1917 by Father Edward J. Flanagan, Boys Town welcomes children of all races, genders, and spiritual beliefs. Boys Town began with Father Flanagan, an ordained priest from Ireland, who dedicated his life to addressing social issues affecting vulnerable children in Omaha, Nebraska. Driven by a vision of creating new opportunities for those in dire circumstances, including imprisoned youth, he sought and supported the most disadvantaged boys. Father Flanagan's visionary approach to learning began with the Home for Boys, which has since grown to address the changing needs of those it serves. His enduring mission to create a world where children are valued, loved, educated, and guided continues to inspire and adapt to the needs of the community.

In 1938, Boys Town's notoriety soared thanks to the Hollywood hit Boys Town, starring Spencer Tracy as Father Flanagan. The inspiring and eye-opening story led to a sequel called Men of Boys Town that kept the mission in the public eye. In 1986 Boys Town was featured in Miracle of the Heart, A Boys Town Story. Most recently, Heart of a Servant and Blue Baby were released in 2024. They are documentaries that follow the life of Father Flanagan and the journey of eight incarcerated youth at Boys Town, respectively.

“At Boys Town we firmly believe that a strong education is a life-changing foundational opportunity that all youth deserve.”

— Boys Town CEO



PROCESS

Bringing a Vision to Life

The process of defining the project's scope began with listening. The design team spent extensive time with the Boys Town Core Planning Team, which included strategic administrators and Boys Town Leaders, teachers, family teachers, students, and alumni to understand their aspirations and the realities of the existing school environment. We developed a set of design Guiding Principles, defined what we hoped the building would provide through a We See Statement, and established a Spirit of Place, an effective north star for the project. More than 2,000 hours of workshops, shadowing, and over 30 engagement moments built a shared understanding of what Boys Town students need to feel safe, supported, and ready to learn. From this, the project scope naturally emerged, grounded in research, shaped by lived experience, and driven by the community's commitment to its children.

SPIRIT OF PLACE

It is our goal to create a place where we can all grow together. We are all integral in that process, coming together to create a greater whole. At Boys Town, we believe every child, regardless of circumstance, deserves the opportunity to succeed. We look beyond the building to a higher good, through spirit, culture, and a foundation of spirit.

WE SEE STATEMENT

We see a safe, flexible learning environment that encourages positive interactions and behaviors as students achieve their academic dreams and prepare for adulthood with technology at their fingertips.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Safe and Innovative

Our school will be a safe place where students and teachers feel comfortable and inspired to grow and learn.



Flexible and Adaptable

Our school will inspire students to reach their full potential through flexible learning environments with spaces for collaboration that provide structure and have the ability to adjust to the unique needs of students and teachers.



Honoring the Past and Looking Toward the Future

Our school will honor the diverse legacy of our historic institution and learn from it while looking toward the future with innovative spaces for collaboration, interaction, and creativity.



Creative and Inspiring

Our school will be a family-oriented, innovative, and inviting environment that fosters fun and inspires students to love to learn again.

PROCESS

Candid Conversations, Authentic Results

The planning and visioning sessions aimed to clearly understand the challenges facing Boys Town and how a new Education Center could meaningfully transform the student experience. From the start, the process was deeply collaborative. The design team engaged the Boys Town Core Planning Team, educators, students, alumni, and leadership in more than 30 sessions that included shadowing, workshops, design reviews, campus tours, and change management training. Every voice was intentionally invited and incorporated into the design.

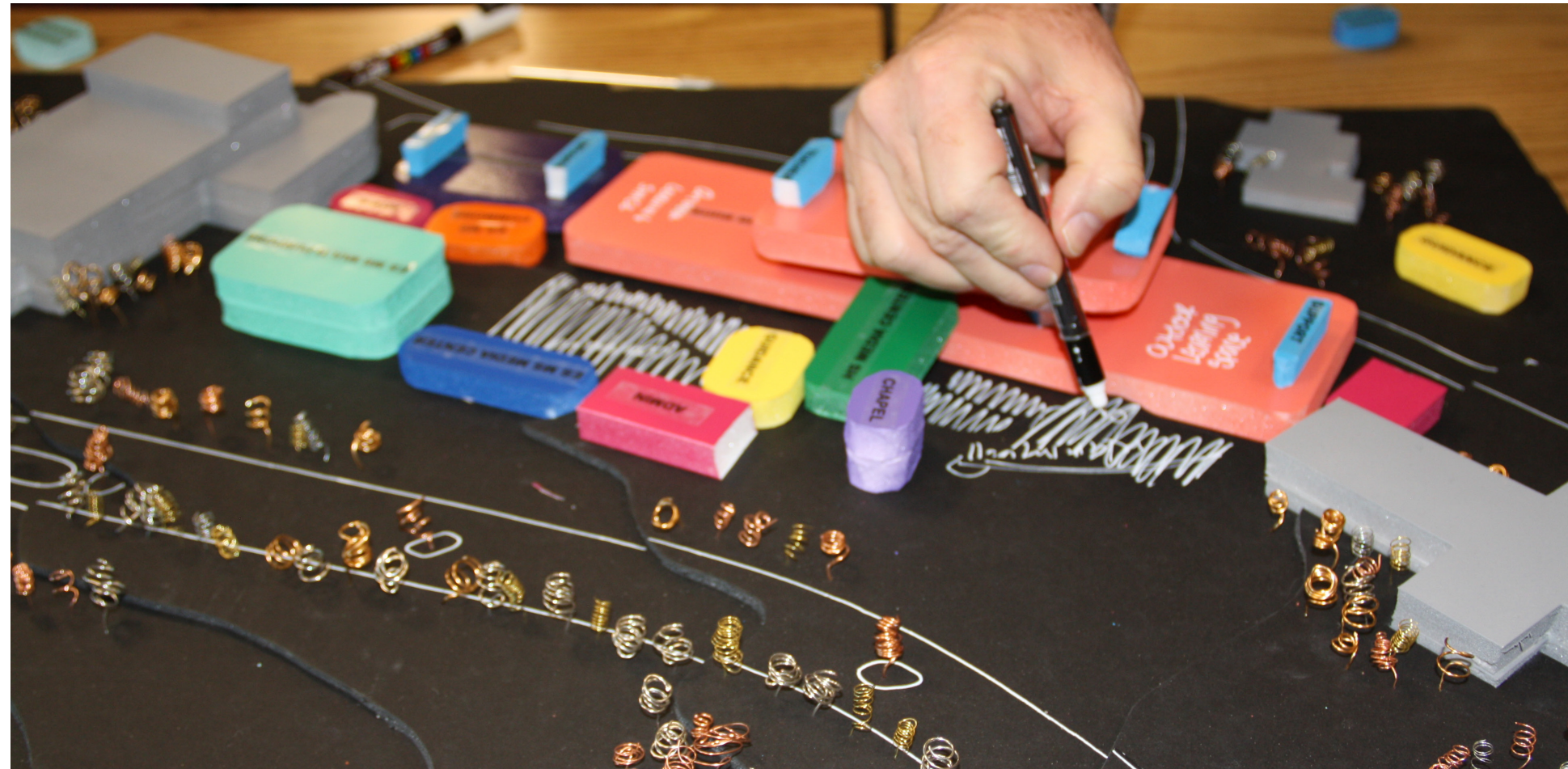
These conversations uncovered daily realities for Boys Town students. An educator shared the students said they felt like ‘zoo animals’ on display when tour buses passed by, revealing layers of unrealized student discomfort and trauma. This insight became a catalyst for design strategies that protect student dignity, increase privacy, and still welcome visitors in a respectful way.

The engagement process also made the need for trauma informed design unmistakable. Nearly all Boys Town students have experienced trauma, and staff described their own experiences of secondary trauma. These insights guided decisions about visibility, acoustics, natural light, spatial boundaries, and educator support spaces, which are exhibited in the physical and educational environment.

Ultimately, this process became more than data gathering. It reshaped how the design team approaches learning environments, deepening their commitment to empathy driven, trauma aware design and resulting in a facility that truly reflects the needs and values of the Boys Town community.

“I can’t think of another school where students helped design, build, and then attend their school.”

— Boys Town Administrator



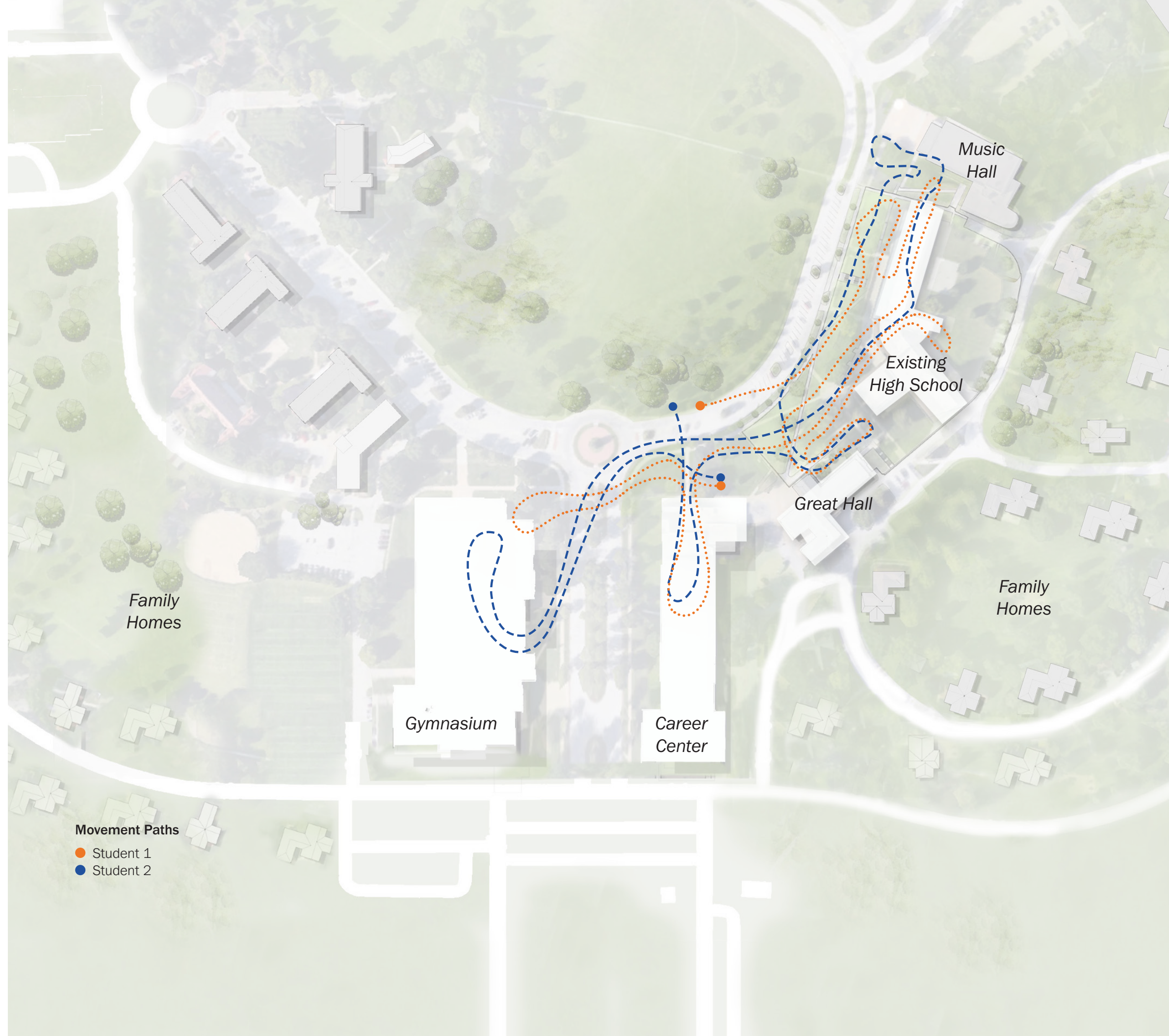
AVAILABLE ASSETS

Replacing a Boys Town Icon

Boys Town explored two options for its new Education Center: renovating and adding on to the 1948 high school or building on a new location within the 1,300-acre campus. Comprehensive facility and educational assessments revealed that renovation could not meet modern instructional needs or the mission of Boys Town. Through visioning workshops, student and teacher shadowing, and movement mapping, the team determined that building a new education center on the existing site offered the strongest alignment with student pathways, campus efficiency, and educational goals. Prior to this exercise, building new on the existing site was not an option that was considered. It was the design team's planning efforts that unlocked the solution that truly best served Boys Town, the students, and the educators.

Student Movement Insights

One of the most influential factors in selecting the new school site came from the design team's student and teacher shadowing exercises. Over several days, the team mapped movements across campus at 15-minute intervals, documenting where students traveled, where they clustered, and how staff circulated between buildings. These movement patterns revealed that the existing high school site functioned as the natural hub of daily activity, anchoring academic, residential, and support services. Building on this centrally located site not only aligned with the school's educational program and campus rhythms, but also reduced travel time between buildings throughout the day.



Movement Paths

- Student 1
- Student 2

STUDENT-LED DESIGN

Ownership Through Artwork

Engaging students in the design process became one of the most meaningful parts of the project, giving them a tangible voice in shaping their new school. Throughout the 20 month construction period, 40–50 student groups toured the site, learning about the building as it developed and seeing their ideas take shape in real time. Additionally, each student received a coloring book to complete over winter break which inspired the colors and patterns for the tile project. Their creativity informed several key interior elements, strengthening ownership, pride, and connection to the new Education Center.

Tile Project

Students worked in small groups to develop tile patterns that would inspire feature walls throughout the building. In partnership with the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, life sized chipboard tiles were created for students to arrange and color, turning their concepts into full scale patterns. The final student designed tiles were installed at five key locations in the building, serving as daily reminders of their voices and agency in the design.

Butterfly Mural

Students also contributed to a large butterfly mural in the media center. Each student decorated a butterfly, and local Omaha artist Watti White assembled them into a single, sweeping artwork. The butterfly, chosen by students to symbolize growth, transformation, and faith, reflects the personal journeys they undertake at Boys Town. The theme continues throughout the campus, where subtle chrysalises and butterflies appear as symbols of hope and evolution.

“It really meant a lot to incorporate pieces of them, who they are, and to see the representation of our students in the design of our building.”

—Boys Town Administrator



RESPONSE

Life Changing Experience

One Boys Town student created an opportunity for himself and was an intricate part of the construction process. Colton, who was a student at Boys Town, approached project leaders on site and asked if he could come work for them. They jumped at the opportunity and the student began working as a Laborer 1 at the Education Center. He adjusted his school schedule with the support of Boys Town, allowing him to work from 7 a.m. - noon and attend classes in the afternoon. After graduating in May 2023, he joined the construction team full time. He became the team's "do it all guy" and made an immediate impact on the project. His ultimate goal was to become a crane operator, which he began training for later that summer. The practical resume-building experience he was able to gain while working on the Boys Town Education Center played a pivotal role in helping him pursue his dream.

“If I hadn’t been at Boys Town, I wouldn’t have met people with the construction family who are helping me pursue my dream of going into construction.”

— Boys Town Student



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT



“You can’t learn in an environment where you don’t feel safe.”

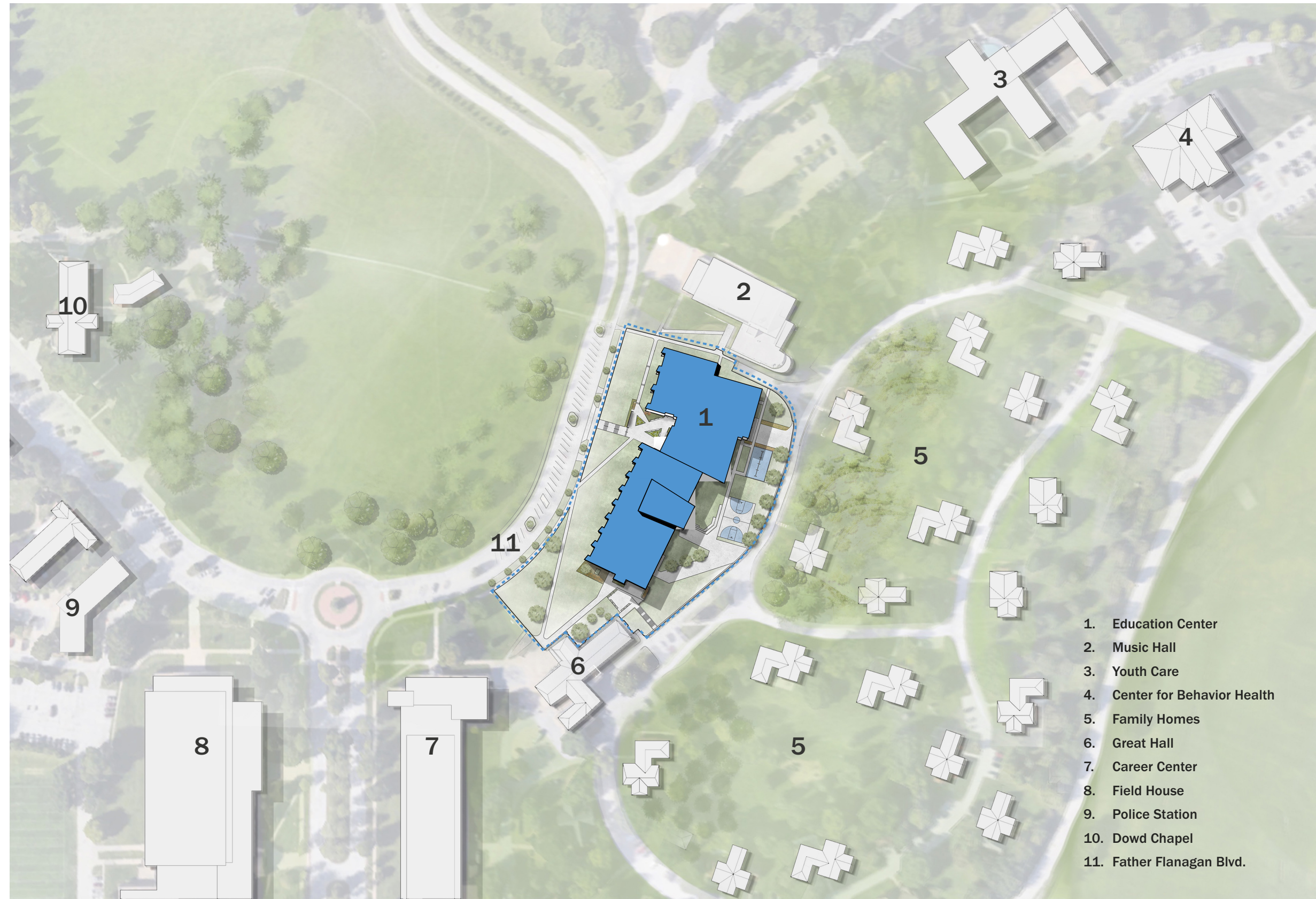
— Design Team Member



■ SITE PLAN

Centrally Located

Holding a prominent position on Flanagan Boulevard, the Boys Town Education Center serves as the hub for students' day-to-day activities. It seamlessly blends in aesthetically with the surrounding Boys Town Campus with its custom brick facade. Following student foot traffic during the visioning process was a determining factor in the campus' location. It is important for students to efficiently move from building to building while also taking advantage of the fresh air and access to nature. In addition, clear wayfinding and familiar routes are measures that mitigate reactions to the effects of trauma.



“It reminds me more of what I would see if I were to walk on to a college campus.”

— Boys Town Student

CONTEXT

Balancing Transparency and Privacy

Early in the design process, students and staff voiced a need for greater privacy on a campus situated along the main drive of a National Historic Landmark visited by hundreds of thousands of people each year. Students often felt exposed as tour buses slowed past the former school, and addressing this concern became a defining design priority.

The new three-story, 110,000 SF Education Center creates a clear separation between public and private realms. On the street-facing side, projecting bays orient windows perpendicular to the road, bringing natural light into classrooms while preventing direct views inside.

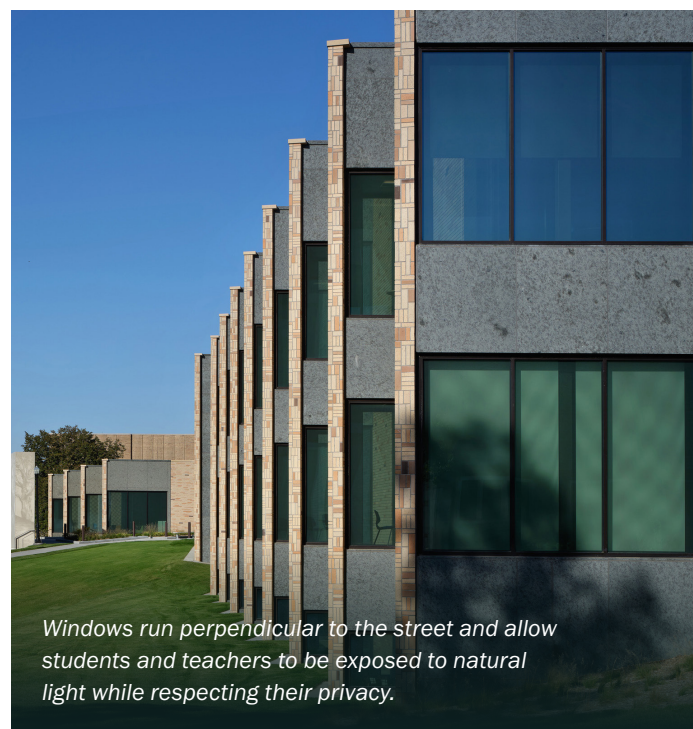
To further protect student dignity, the main entrance is intentionally concealed within a student-centered courtyard. A sculptural monument shields the entry from the street, with its monochromatic, history-focused graphics visible at a distance but dissolving as visitors approach, signaling respectful boundaries. The interior side of the monument bursts with color and movement, celebrating student growth and the spirit of Boys Town.

“When students come to Boys Town, education success is often the first success they’ve had in their lives. It’s our job to create an innovative environment because the traditional environment hasn’t always been successful for our kids.”

— Boys Town Administrator



Student privacy is protected by strategic design, limiting exposure to those visiting the campus.



Windows run perpendicular to the street and allow students and teachers to be exposed to natural light while respecting their privacy.



Comfort nooks created by the design immerse students in a biophilic elements and foster a safe, intimate learning environment.

RESPONSE

Designing for Trauma

Early in the planning process, shadowing exercises, engagement sessions, and historical research affirmed that the physical environment would be essential to student success and that Father Flanagan long believed in supportive, uplifting surroundings. These insights aligned the design team and Boys Town leadership around a research-informed, trauma-aware approach.

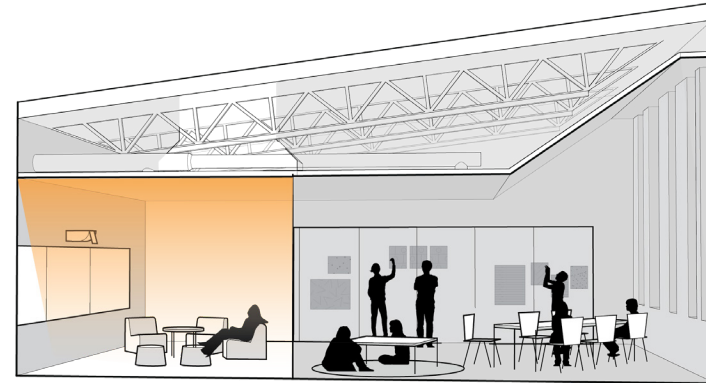
Trauma-informed design became a central driver, shaping spaces around dignity, belonging, and comfort. Principles such as sensory boundaries and clear visibility translated into abundant natural light, open sightlines, the removal of hidden spaces, and appropriately scaled areas that let students regulate privacy and proximity.

Every space is intentionally designed to help students feel safe, stay engaged, and access support when needed. By directly responding to what students and educators experience each day, the physical environment now acts as an active partner in academic success and emotional wellbeing.

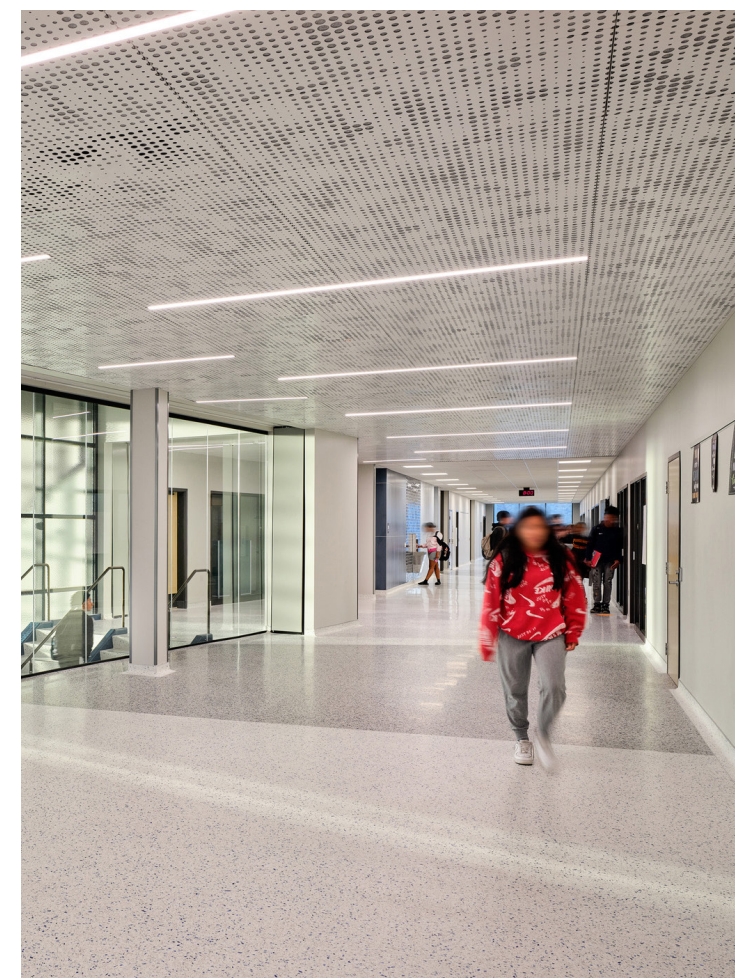
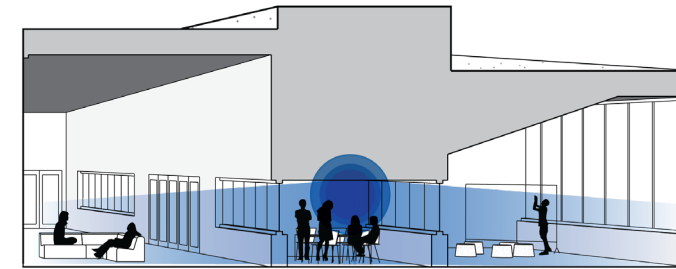
“We approach visioning and planning with a renewed focus because of the impact the research and student-centered design at Boys Town had on our design team.”

— Design Team Member

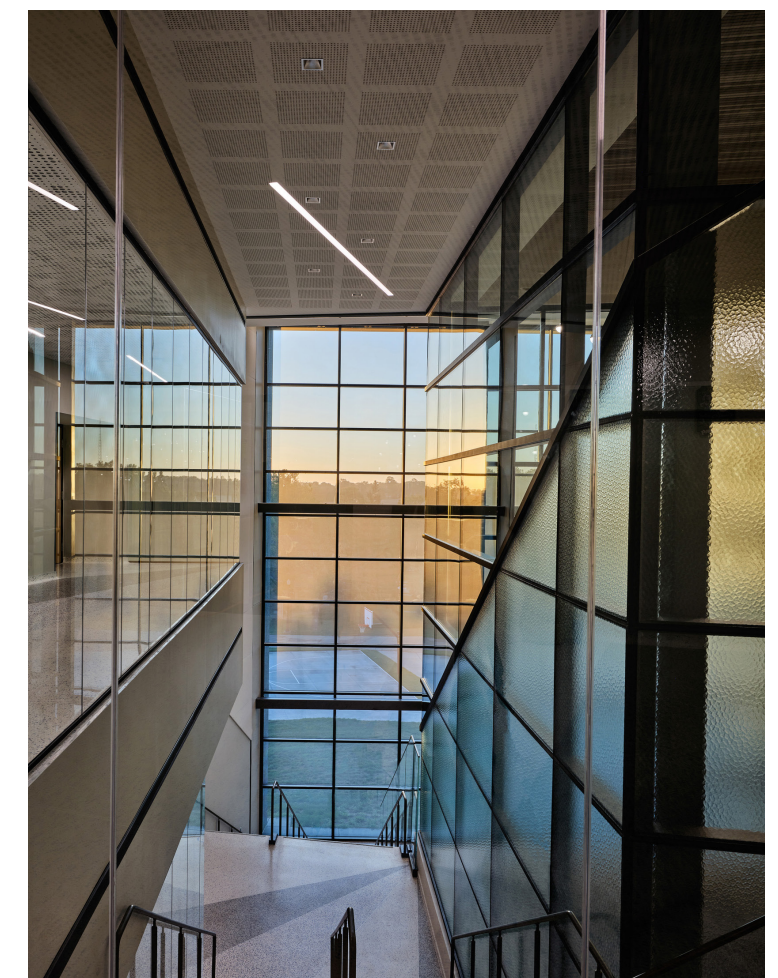
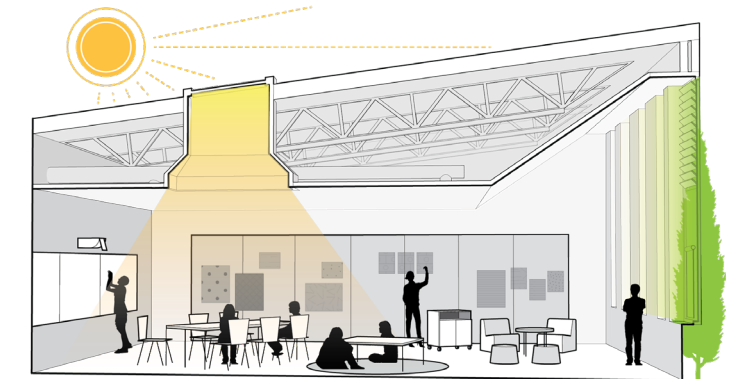
APPROPRIATE PRIVACY



VISIBILITY



NATURAL CONNECTION



RESPONSE

Spirit Hall and the Central Staircase

Spirit Hall

Spirit Hall serves as the physical and philosophical heart of the Education Center. This two-story, glass encased space offers students and staff a serene place for reflection, meditation, and the practice of personal faith. Art glass softens views for privacy while still allowing safe supervision. Designed with inclusive adjacencies to support all religious backgrounds, Spirit Hall reflects Father Flanagan's belief that faith should be a grounding part of each student's Boys Town experience. The space brings that legacy into the new school in a welcoming, contemporary way.

Central Staircase

Wrapping around Spirit Hall is the three-story central staircase. It is the only stair case students can use. All other stairs are egress only and alarmed. It functions as the school's primary circulation hub and a direct response to trauma informed research. Previous stairwells were difficult to supervise, crowded, and stressful for students. The new design addresses those concerns through:

A central point of supervision that allows staff to oversee movement efficiently.

Wide stair and corridor dimensions that reduce congestion and support comfortable spacing.

Six foot tall railings that provide safety without feeling restrictive.

Glass guardrails that promote visibility and bring natural light throughout the core.

Warm, natural materials chosen to avoid institutional cues and maintain a welcoming atmosphere.

Together, Spirit Hall and the Central Staircase create a highly visible, supervised, and dignified environment that supports both student wellbeing and daily movement throughout the school.



RESPONSE

Sustainability and Resiliency with Historical Nodes

The new Boys Town Education Center façade reflects the character of the historic campus while giving the building a fresh identity. Brick and stone details reinterpret familiar Boys Town patterns in a modern way.

Because the site faces north-south, managing daylight and heat was a challenge. Window bays with vertical fins bring natural light into classrooms, protect privacy, and greatly reduce heat gain by limiting west-facing glass. Paired with a high performance envelope and optimized frits, the design minimizes glare and supports a comfortable learning environment.

Durable, timeless materials reinforce the building's welcoming feel. Terrazzo floors provide a long lasting, low maintenance surface throughout. The building connects to the Boys Town central mechanical plant to reduce energy use, and a bipolar ionization system improves indoor air quality by removing airborne particles.



Buildings on campus feature unique brick patterns, as seen here. These patterns inspired the exterior design for the Education Center.

EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT



“The Education Center gives us flexible spaces to take students outside the classroom and supports collaborative learning.”

— Boys Town Administrator

EDUCATIONAL MAPS

Designing for Future-Ready Learning

The vision for the new Education Center comes to life through learning environments that are safe, flexible, inspire creativity, and honor Boys Town's history. Elementary and middle school students have access to a shared learning commons for collaboration and "messy work." A multipurpose room that also serves as a FEMA-rated storm shelter offers activity space for these students to engage in physical education activities. The media center serves all students, grades 4-12, and features a collaborative approach with books focused on leisure and reading. Maker spaces or "tinker spaces" give high school students the opportunity to immerse themselves in technology and STEM-related activities. Students in good academic and behavioral standing have access to privilege rooms, which are special places for games, movies, and social interaction. Three outdoor classrooms are incorporated based on direct student input.

1. Administration
2. Small Classroom Studio
3. Medium Classroom Studio
4. Large Classroom Studio
5. Learning Commons
6. Small Group Room
7. Maker Space
8. Privilege Room
9. Spirit Hall
10. Student Stair
11. Educator Support Space
12. Educator Respite Room
13. ES | MS Dining Commons
14. ES | MS Gym
FEMA Rate Storm Shelter
15. Media Center
16. Outdoor Classroom
17. Play Group



CONTEXT

Research-Informed Design

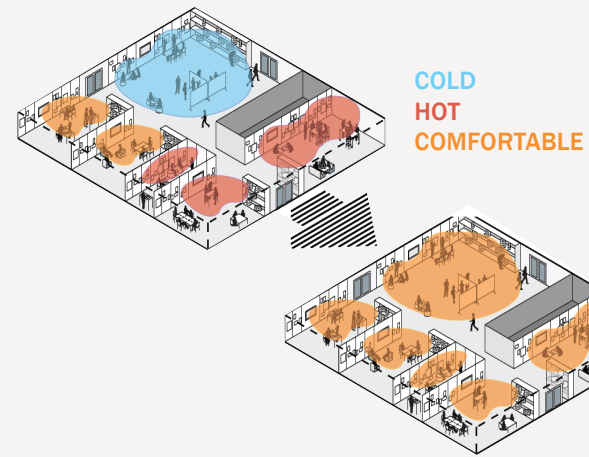
The design team also examined how flexibility, individualization, naturalness, and stimulation affect the learning environment. Research informed every space at the Boys Town Education Center and intentionally supported the project's vision.

FLEXIBILITY



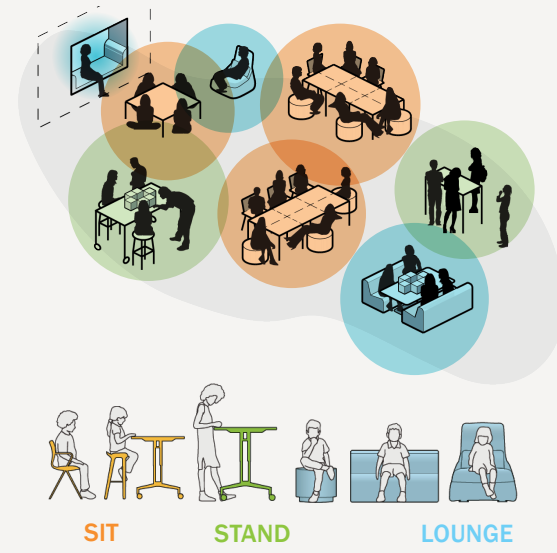
Flexible learning spaces support better outcomes when key design elements are considered. At Boys Town, students move through varied spaces that keep them active and engaged

NATURALNESS



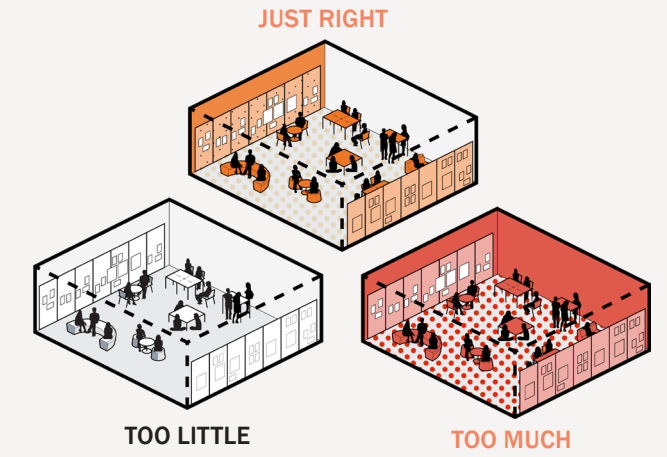
Temperatures can vary widely across learning spaces based on activity, group size, equipment, and window orientation. Giving teachers control of heating and cooling in each space helps them maintain optimal comfort for their learners.

INDIVIDUALIZATION

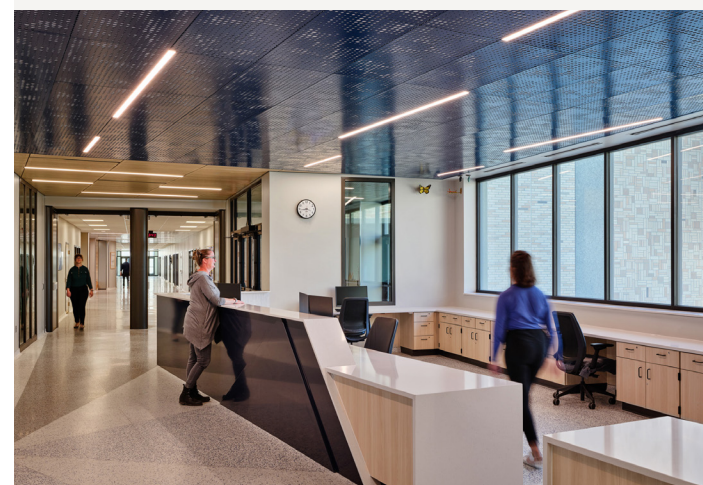


Student engagement increases when learners can sit, stand, or lounge comfortably. True comfort goes beyond basics and requires personalized options. At Boys Town, students have ample seating choices and the space to use them effectively.

STIMULATION



When students see collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking reflected in their environment, engagement increases. At Boys Town, student-led artwork activates visual thinking networks and gives learners ownership and pride in their space.



RESPONSE

Design that Prioritizes Students and Educators

At Boys Town, it's difficult to parse out the elements of the educational environment without acknowledging the connection to the physical environment. Programming and classroom features took their cues from how the physical environment responds to research and feedback garnered from firsthand accounts at Boys Town. As one member of the design team pointed out,

“You can't learn in an environment where you don't feel safe.”

The design prioritizes comfort, privacy, and safety and transparency to create an optimal learning environment for the students at Boys Town.

Classroom Size

Students who have experienced trauma may have boundary issues, so the design affords 64% more space than a typical school, with 55 SF per student to enhance comfort and psychological safety.

Light Features

Each classroom includes tunable lighting that allows educators to adjust illumination to support different learning needs. Natural light is also a major priority of the design. Unlike the previous school, which had many interior areas with little daylight, the new facility maximizes access to natural light while maintaining the privacy students and teachers need.

Flexible Furniture

The Boys Town educational model relies on flexible, future-ready learning, yet the former facility could not support these values. The new design introduces a diverse mix of learning spaces, with classroom studios sized for small, medium, and large groups, allowing educators to adjust instruction and maintain lower student-to-teacher ratios for those who need additional support.

Comfort Nooks

Comfort nooks are fashioned along the external walls facing Flanagan Boulevard. These “spaces within spaces” are multifaceted. In addition to the exterior fin that provides an extra layer of safety and security to students, they also allow students who are experiencing boundary issues to be a part of the class while seeking the space they need.



Safety and Security Measures

The design integrates safety and security measures that are effective yet unobtrusive. Interior layouts clearly identify protected areas within classrooms that are shielded from hallway views, while strategic sightlines and a discreet video security system enhance supervision without creating a punitive atmosphere. Alarm systems are intentionally softened to avoid triggering students with trauma, providing calm transitions during emergencies. Each classroom includes two exit points, offering students and staff reassurance and additional protection during crises while preserving a supportive, trauma aware environment.

Transparency

Unknown environments can also trigger students who have experienced trauma. The design allows for clear visibility when entering and exiting spaces, which reduces anxiety. Small group rooms are concealed from the hallway, but are transparent and accessible inside the classrooms. This affords students and teachers privacy from hallway views when in these rooms.

Breakout Rooms and Quick Action Shades

Dispersed small group rooms throughout the building allow for more group work, acoustic separation, and student and teacher one-on-one time. They also serve as de-escalation spaces. If a student is distressed, educators can take the student into this space and quickly activate blackout shades in the room to ensure the student is not on display.

Building Orientation

One of the most innovative features of the design is the intentional creation of a distinct front and back to the building. Because students often felt on display when tour groups passed the former school, the new entrances are softened and discreet, reducing visibility from the main drive. The non-public side of the building opens toward the campus, maximizing views and creating a sense of openness for students. Along the public street, windows are oriented and recessed to provide natural light while ensuring students feel protected and less visible to visitors.

Teacher Respite Rooms

There are four teacher respite rooms throughout the facility with varying levels of intimacy and privacy. After learning about the secondhand trauma Boys Town educators experience, it was important that the design respond to their professional and personal needs, as well.



RESPONSE

Future-Ready Learning

Boys Town aims to prepare students for life after they leave campus, whether they return to their home schools, pursue further education, or enter the workforce. The former high school could not support this goal. With limited technology, minimal devices, and no consistent digital access, students lacked exposure to the tools and skills needed for modern learning.

The new Education Center fully integrates technology to support flexible instruction. Every student now has a personal device, and the building includes mounted and mobile interactive tools, dedicated charging infrastructure, and furniture designed for tech-rich learning. Educational designers also guided teachers through change-management training to help them transition to a future-ready instructional model.

Expanding STEM access was equally important. While Boys Town previously offered limited STEM opportunities through its Career Center, the new facility adds dedicated labs for robotics, coding, and 3D printing. These labs support classes, clubs, and hands-on exploration, giving students daily exposure to industry-aligned tools and sparking interest as they see real STEM work happening throughout the building.

“Having a new school and new technology and new things for them, shows that this school program will do whatever it takes for them to achieve their education.”

— Boys Town Student



RESULTS



“Graduating (high school) was never even a thought in my eyes. Just to be here is surreal. To make my family proud and to make myself proud is a big accomplishment.”

— Boys Town Student on Graduation Day



ELEVATING EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Data Supported

Boys Town gives students the pathway to educational and life success through the Education Center. All throughout the design process, designers prioritized the project's Guiding Principles. The result is an educational facility where students and staff feel joy for learning through a safe and inclusive environment. In keeping true to Father Flanagan's mission and vision, the Boys Town Education Center is a springboard of hope for those who call it home for generations to come.

“For me, this is the best thing that’s happened to me during my time at Boys Town. I’ve never experienced a brand-new school before. I’ve never experienced a school like this. It’s my senior year, it’s my time to shine.”

— Boys Town Student

100% Teacher Retention



From the 2023-24 school year to the 2024-25 school year, Boys Town retained every teacher on staff highlighting a commitment to enhancing teacher wellbeing through the design.

↑ Math Scores Rise 30 Points



According to MAP achievement scores through the Northwest Evaluation Association, students who attended Boys Town in 2023-24 saw their math scores (86th percentile) significantly rise compared to the scores of the students who attended Boys Town in 2022-23 (56th percentile).

↓ Behavioral Incidents Significantly Down



From 2022-23 to 2023-24, Boys Town saw a decrease in behavioral incidents. Further, they saw an even greater decrease in behavioral incidents in those students who attended Boys Town in both 2022-23 and 2023-24.

■ LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCES

Living Out a Mission

The staff and administration at Boys Town have an unwavering commitment to the Boys Town mission – and the students are the benefactors. Boys Town has an educational facility that is tailor-made for the students and educators, which enables them to be successful. The designers recently sat down with some of the Boys Town students to get their thoughts about the Education Center. They asked them what they were most proud of at school.

One student responded:

“I’m proud that my grades are better.”

They were asked why they think their grades have seen improvement:

“It’s because of the teachers. All of them come in early or stay after school if you need help.”

The design team shared this story with the Boys Town administration and teachers:

“Everyone that comes to work at Boys Town believes this is a place that can change kids’ lives. In order to accomplish that, you need to have the resources. Our staff and our students are deserving of a place like this because they are doing such amazing things to change the lives of these kids.”

The student highlighted here was at Boys Town prior to the project and is now preparing to graduate from the new Education Center. They are a member of the robotics team that meets before and after school, and an exemplary student in the STEM program. Through the help of Boys Town, they were able to secure an internship that will enable them to attend community college after graduation with all educational expenses covered to pursue a degree and licensure as a diesel mechanic.

Boys Town, its teachers, and the Education Center forever changed this student’s outlook and trajectory by supporting the mission of life-changing work for children in need.

