

# Memorial High School Phase 1 Rebuild

Spring Branch Independent School District  
Hedwig Village, Texas



EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY

SCOPE &  
BUDGET

SCHOOL &  
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# Executive Summary

## A high-performing school for a high-performing student body

While Memorial High School is known for its accomplished student body, its 1960s building could not keep pace with the demands of 21st century learning. This Phase I design meets that need, housing 29 classrooms, 21 science labs, and a dining common within a collegiate-inspired, four-story building that enhances student experiences and highlights the campus's rich heritage.

This design reflects the energy and excellence of the community itself. Here, learning is visible, collaboration is effortless, and movement through the day feels intuitive and connected.



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# Scope of Work & Budget

The start of a multi-phase *masterpiece*

CONSTRUCTION COST  
**\$83.8 M**

- SERVICES**
- MASTER PLANNING
  - DESIGN
  - DOCUMENTATION
  - BIDDING
  - CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION

**SIZE:**

**161,250 SF**  
NEW CONSTRUCTION

**27,000 SF**  
RENOVATION

**4,234 SF**  
ATHLETIC FACILITIES







# Scope of Work & Budget

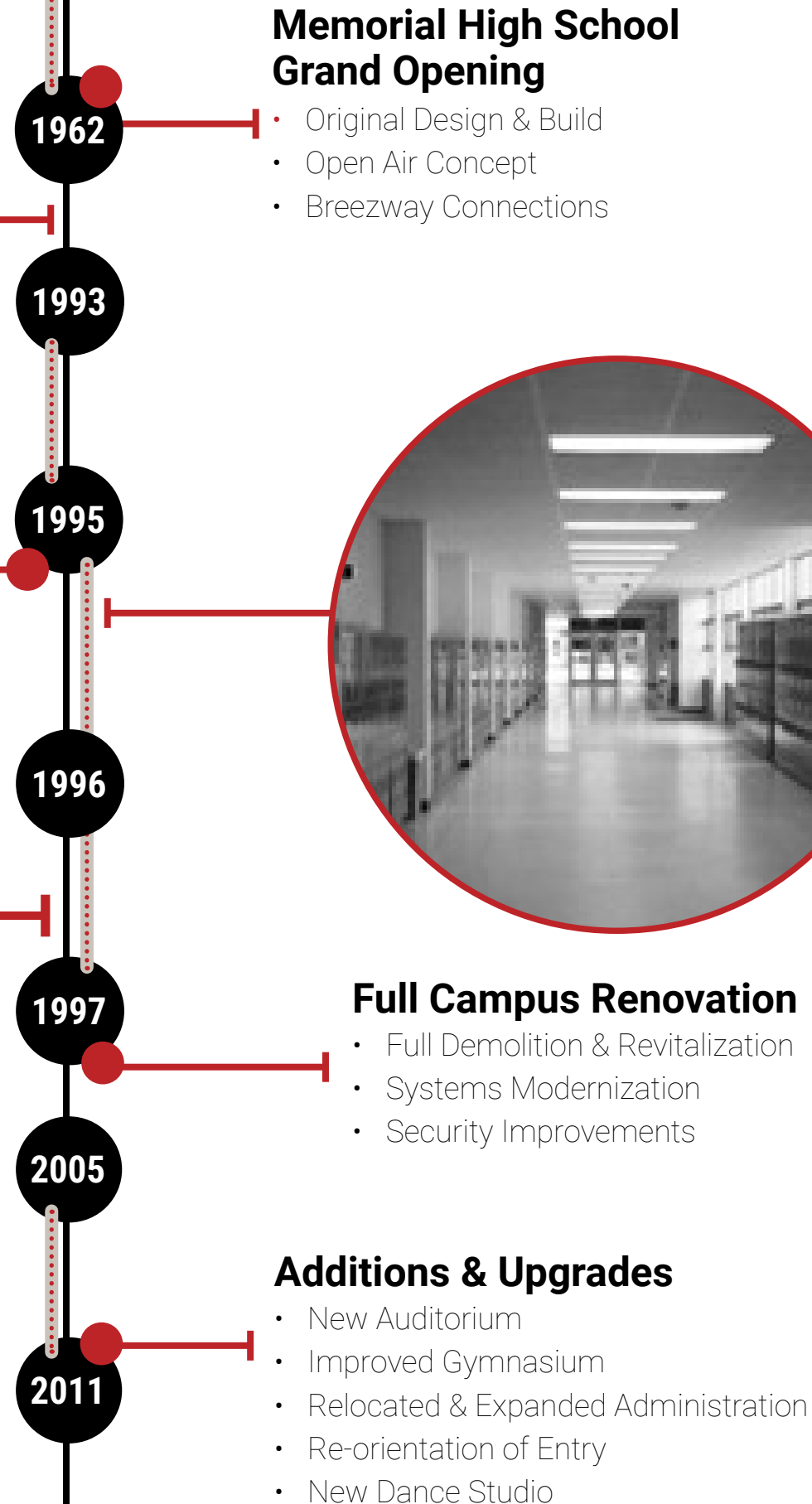
## The Phasing Story

The Memorial High School campus had maxed out its footprint, landlocked by residential and commercial properties. This constraint meant the new building had to be strategically situated within the existing campus, and construction had to be carefully phased, with existing buildings and student activities remaining active throughout. During the master planning, the design team identified the best location for the new building, planning both Phase I and Phase II.

The campus is bisected by a main road, with academic buildings to the west and athletic facilities to the east. To maintain overall campus cohesion, the design team relocated the existing tennis courts to the athletic campus, freeing space on the academic side. Combined with the partial demolition of the existing school that retains only the portion serving administrative functions, the project team created room for Phase I. Construction schedules were carefully coordinated to avoid the need for temporary classrooms.



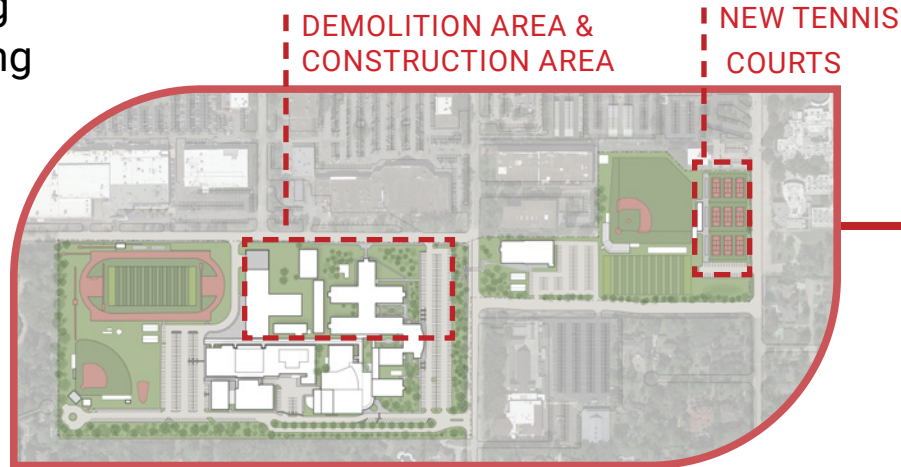
-  Design Phase
-  Construction Phase
-  Fully Operational
-  Design Scope Milestone



# Scope of Work & Budget

After this partial demolition, the remaining administrative building stood apart from the new construction, requiring careful attention to both student safety and visual cohesion. A secure perimeter fence encloses the area between old and new, restricting unauthorized entry while allowing students and staff to exit freely. The administrative building also received a new façade to maintain a cohesive campus aesthetic.

In Phase II, funded through a bond program planned for 2028, administrative services will be relocated and the remaining building will be fully demolished. The next phase will extend the A glass-enclosed bridge will connect the two phases, creating a unified, modern building fit for the community's needs.



## Master Plan Phase II: Expansion & Replacements

- New Campus Entry
- Parking Improvements
- Campus-wide Updates

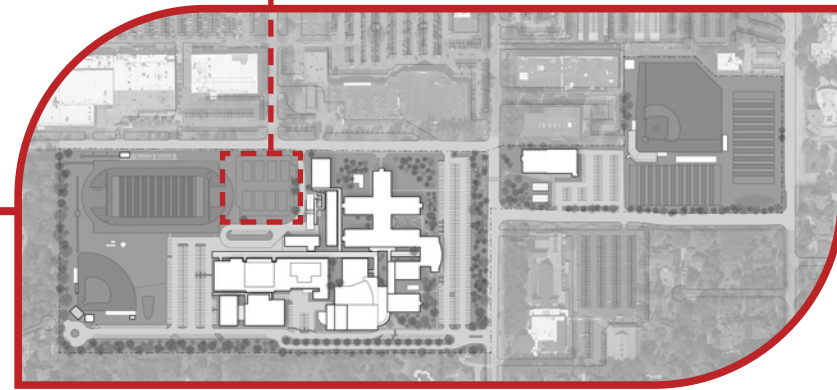
- Design Phase
- ⋯ Construction Phase
- Fully Operational
- Design Scope Milestone

2017

\$898.4M Bond Approval

2018

ORIGINAL TENNIS COURT



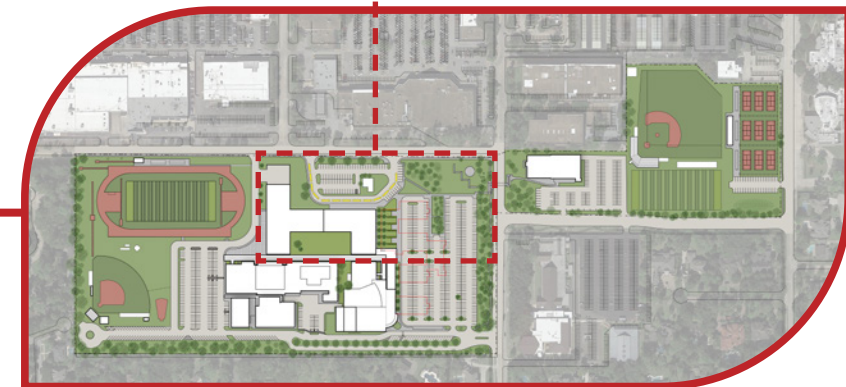
2020

## Master Plan Phase I: New Academic Building

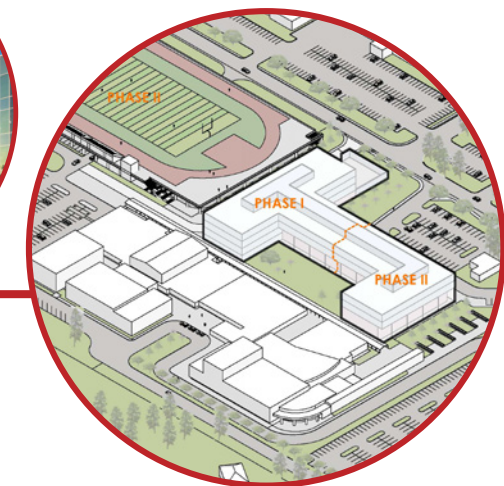
- Four Story High School Building
- Athletic Improvements

2022

NEW CONSTRUCTION & TRAFFIC FLOW IMPROVEMENTS



2028



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# Scope of Work & Budget

## Site Plan

The Memorial High School Phase I project is a T-shaped building. Between this new building and the existing school, a landscaped, shaded courtyard has become a vibrant gathering place where students eat and socialize. Covered walkways extend from the new to the existing building, providing weather-protected circulation that ties the phased campus together, while a drop-off circulation route, positioned parallel to the courtyard, helps improve on-campus traffic.



# Scope of Work & Budget

## Programming Summary

The ground floor anchors the building's community-facing functions, with a large dining hall and adjacent serving area, as well as limited admin offices and lounges. Level two begins the shift toward academics, where across three floors science laboratories are concentrated at the wings of the T-shape, grouped together to share resources and infrastructure, and general classrooms fill the spine.

Each science lab and classroom cluster is paired with a dedicated flex space. These adaptable breakout rooms are immediately adjacent to instructional areas to allow teachers to extend lessons, run parallel activities, or give students room for independent work without leaving the academic neighborhood.



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# School & Community Research and Engagement

*Where community voices translate directly into design decisions and measurable impact*

## Stakeholders & Community Engagement

The engagement process was deliberately structured to include voices across the full spectrum of the school community. A survey gathered responses from over 250 students, parents, and staff, while advisory teams—the Master Plan Advisory Team (MPAT) and the Project Advisory Team (PAT)—brought together neighborhood residents, local business partners, government leaders, parents, and students. The team also solicited input from the broader Hedwig Village community and surrounding neighborhoods, particularly around building height, vehicular traffic, and pedestrian connectivity.



## Community Context

Memorial High School is the oldest operating school in Spring Branch ISD, one of Houston’s most established school districts. Since opening in 1962, the school has earned a reputation as the district’s flagship, known for high academic standards, strong college placement, and a deeply loyal and successful alumni base.

In November 2017, Spring Branch ISD voters approved an \$898.4 million bond program by an 80 percent margin, which included funding for the Phase I design and construction. This school bond is the largest in district history and the seventh largest ever in the State of Texas.

# School & Community Research and Engagement



Through monthly meetings and several workshops across planning and design, this engagement produced six guiding principles for the campus, refined through the PAT's collaboration with the design team into specific Phase I directions:

- 1. Create a college-like campus** through a refreshed visual identity, bold architectural expression, and what the PAT called “The WOW Factor.”
- 2. Provide outdoor learning spaces** with strong connections to nature for respite and instruction, a direct response to the community's emphasis on well-being.
- 3. Feature large gathering commons** to create a desired destination that welcomes community access and use beyond school functions.
- 4. Maintain and elevate the existing connection to nature** by preserving the campus's mature canopy and providing outdoor learning environments.
- 5. Design spaces for high levels of learning** through transparency for active learning, flexibility to adapt over time, and environments appropriate for the school's high-performance attitude.
- 6. Improve traffic and pedestrian flow**, including improved navigation on campus and redesigned circulation aligned with Phase I construction.

Community concerns directly shaped design responses, including the four-story height limit, redesigned circulation, and a new pedestrian bridge. As the school outgrew its previous facility, the PAT reinforced the importance of building in flexibility as the campus continues through future phases.

# School & Community Research and Engagement

## Challenges

### Residential Scale

The surrounding residential neighborhood required local government coordination and approval efforts to meet ordinances and codes, while being sensitive to the building's scale and impact on the community. The team created multiple massing studies and building sections for the city to demonstrate the relationship of the new building to its surroundings, ultimately agreeing not to exceed four stories.



North Elevation



East Elevation



### Campus Access and Movement

Traffic flow had long been an issue in and around Memorial High School, as the school's disjointed layout caused significant delays and backups for drivers and residents alike. As a result, the design features a dedicated parent drop-off space, bus lanes, and student parking areas to reduce congestion. Phase II includes considerations for future parking structures that align with the overall campus plans.

# School & Community Research and Engagement

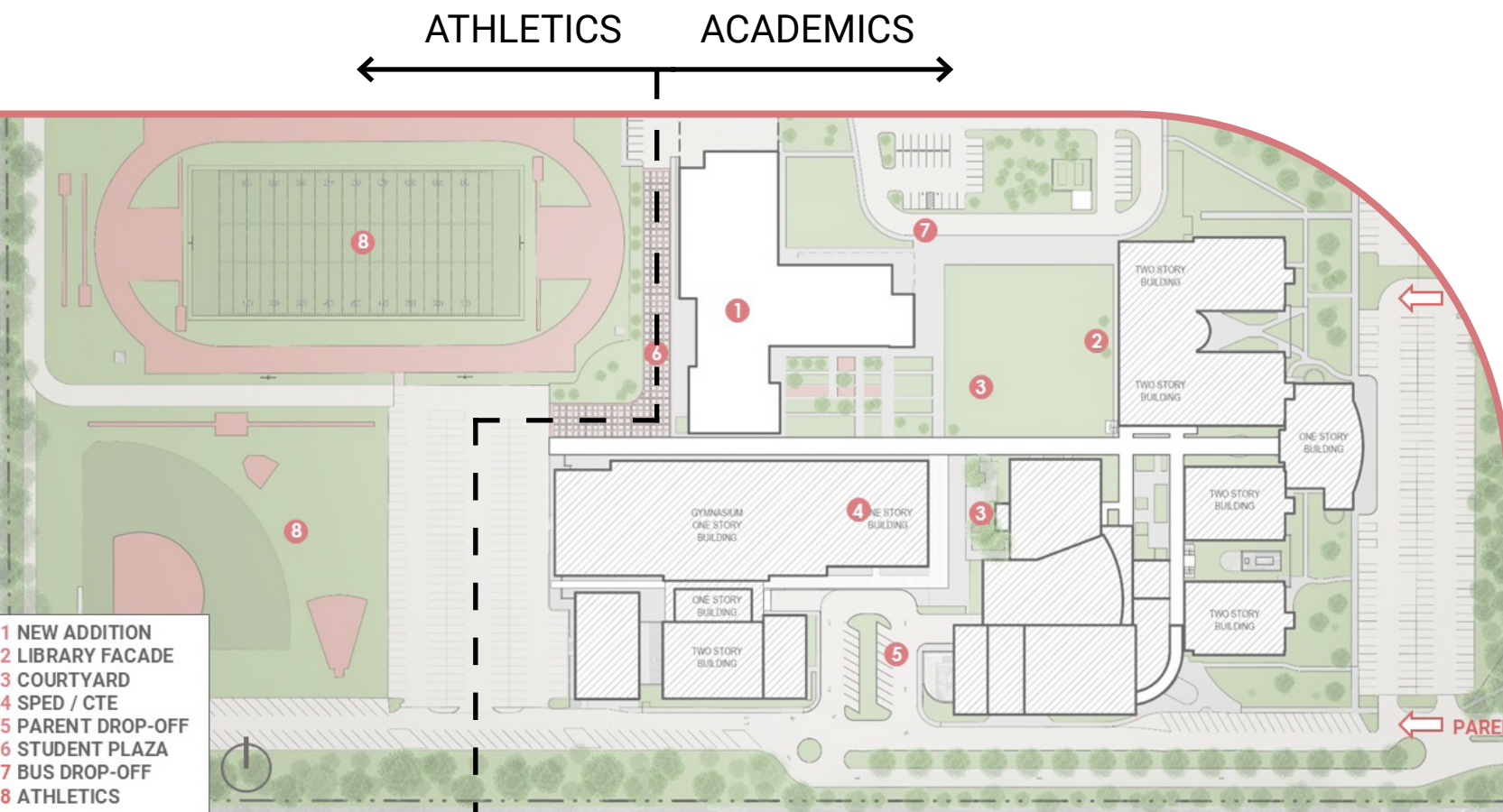
## Available Assets

### Community Support and Funding:

The 2017 bond approval, the largest in district history, gave the design team both the resources and the mandate to pursue a transformative vision rather than an incremental renovation.

### Existing Campus Organization:

The campus's established east-west split between academics and athletics provided a legible framework for phased construction, allowing the design team to strategically reconfigure one side without disrupting the other.



### Mature Tree Canopy:

Over 500 mature trees, initially perceived as a constraint on the building footprint, were reframed as a defining asset. These trees informed the campus layout and, along with 137 planted trees, helped preserve the site's wooded, residential character.

# School & Community Research and Engagement

## Value to the Community

Memorial High School is the historic center of the Spring Branch community, reflected in the resounding investment program. The Phase I project returns on that trust by transforming a dated campus into a modern destination that reflects the community's pride and expectations.

Gathering spaces, including the dining commons and shaded courtyard, are designed to welcome community access and use beyond school hours. Traffic and pedestrian safety improvements, long a source of frustration for residents and families, directly benefit the surrounding neighborhood. And the preservation of the campus's mature tree canopy maintains the character that the community has valued for decades.



# Physical Environment

*A collegiate identity built to last*

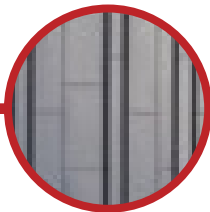
## Physical Design

Along with a forward-looking visual identity—the WOW Factor—Memorial High School selected a high-performing material palette with a long life and low maintenance requirements to maximize their investment. This design thinking drove both interior and exterior design decisions.

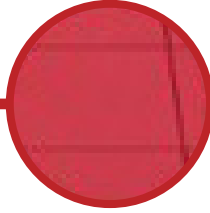
The façade features limestone and metal rainscreens, punctuated by vivid red accents and expansive windows. This variation in materials helps break up the building’s scale to align with the campus’s residential context, while the limestone color selection pays homage to the brick of the former building. Additionally, the ventilated rainscreen systems keep moisture away from the building envelope, protecting insulation performance and extending the façade’s service life.



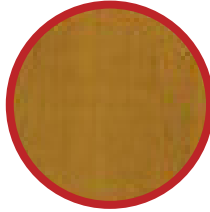
METAL PANEL



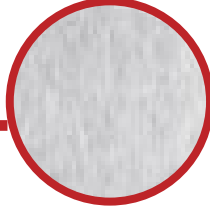
METAL PANEL



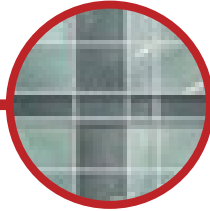
CEILING PANEL



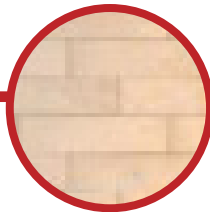
ALUMINUM



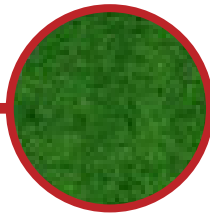
GLASS



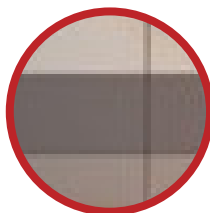
LIMESTONE



TURF



METAL PANEL



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# Physical Environment

Inside, the school is flooded with natural daylight, and a four-story ornamental stair, clad in seven-foot-tall multicolor glazing panels in the school's signature palette, serves as the central focal point and primary circulation path. The base of the stair, situated on a plinth adjacent to the large student commons, can be used for performances, assemblies, or presentations. As the school frequently hosts large events here, a geometric acoustic ceiling helps buffer noise while extending the bold design overhead.

Both inside and outside, the school is brimming with Mustang pride, from custom mosaic tile and a mural to a donor-dedicated sculpture featuring the campus's iconic mascot. This building is large and recognizable, but rather than an intrusion to the neighborhood character, it serves as a welcoming participant, signaling the future of Memorial High School.



# Physical Environment

## Sustainability and Wellness

The ventilated rainscreen envelope, extensive daylighting, and shaded outdoor spaces collectively form a high-performing, occupant-centered building. Additional investments support long-term sustainability and student wellness:

- **Physical activity:** A synthetic turf field and track provide year-round athletic facilities outdoors, while the four-story ornamental stair promotes movement as a natural part of the school day.
- **Low-maintenance landscape:** Native plantings and synthetic turf minimize irrigation and upkeep while maintaining a green, inviting campus.
- **Social infrastructure:** From the dining commons to hallway alcoves to the courtyard, the building is designed with an abundance of informal gathering spaces that support social connection.

“

Spring Branch ISD has proven once again it is capable of designing and constructing a *world class high school campus*.

- *Former Mayor of Hedwig Village*



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# Educational Environment

Transparency, flexibility, and collaboration define the learning experience

## Alignment with District Standards

Memorial High School's Phase I design is aligned with Spring Branch ISD's district-wide vision of T-2-4 Readiness, the commitment that every graduate will attain a technical certificate, military training, or a two- or four-year degree. This framework defines not only academic outcomes but also the Core Characteristics of a T-2-4 Ready Graduate: academically prepared, ethical and service-minded, empathetic and self-aware, persistent and adaptable, a resourceful problem-solver, and a communicator and collaborator.



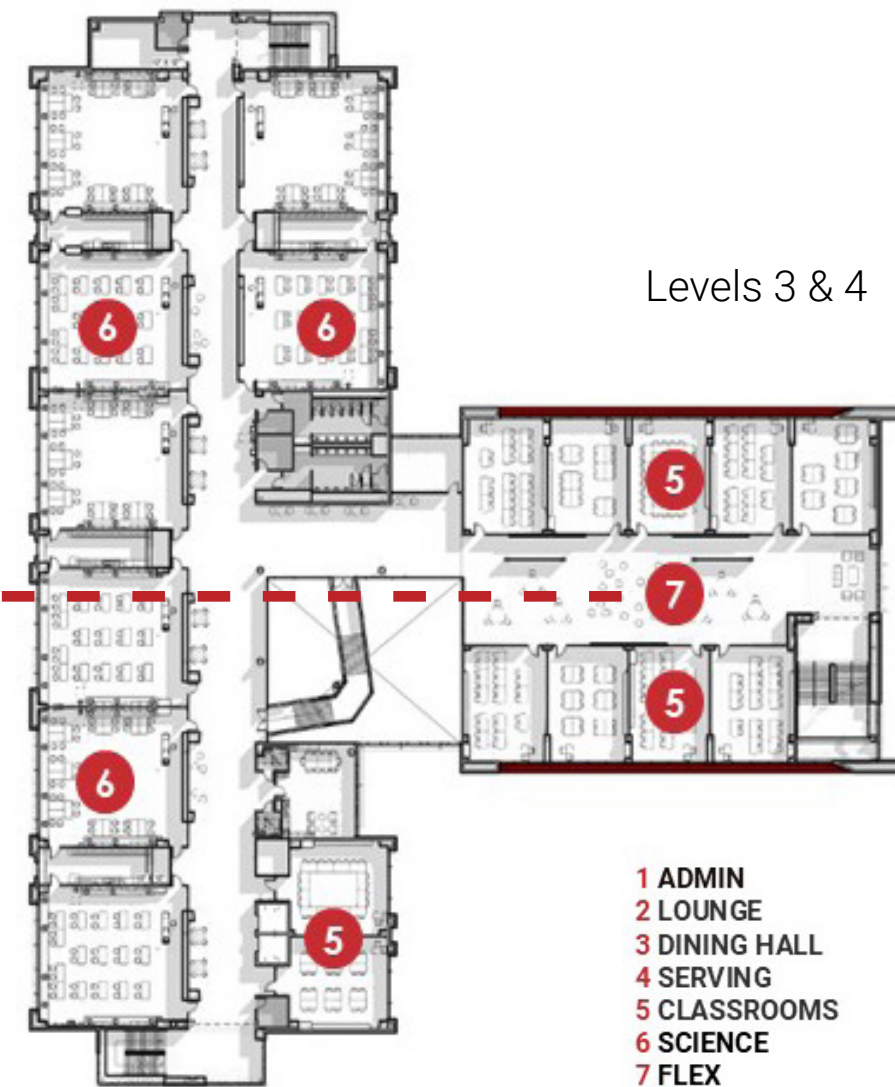
The building's design directly supports these characteristics. Transparent classrooms and visible collaboration spaces cultivate communication and collaboration as daily habits. Dedicated flex spaces paired with every lab and classroom encourage resourceful problem-solving by giving students room to experiment, iterate, and present. And the building's collegiate identity—from the four-story learning stair to the bold material palette—reinforces the expectation that Memorial students are preparing for what comes next, whether that's a university lecture hall, a professional workplace, or military service.

# Educational Environment

## General Classrooms

Supporting all types of instruction—lecture, collaboration, and demonstration—general classrooms are designed around flexibility and promote active learning. The center of each classroom functions as a collaboration area, while glass walls along the edges provide transparency into the hallways. This openness allows for passive student supervision, where staff can monitor activity without interrupting it.

Alcoves with built-in seating extend learning beyond the classroom walls, offering informal spaces for small-group work and conversation.



## Science Laboratories

The science labs are equipped with fume hoods to support hands-on experimentation, while flexible seating and marker boards support instruction and collaborative problem-solving. Shared prep rooms are positioned between adjacent labs, centralizing hazardous material storage and waste disposal for safety and efficiency. These shared prep rooms also double as refuge spaces, integrating safety into the academic environment without dedicating additional square footage.

# Educational Environment

## Collaboration Space

Long hallways are broken up by collaboration spaces with ample seating and writable surfaces. The shaded courtyard between the new and existing school extends this collaborative environment outdoors, offering informal space for group work, meals, and socializing beneath the campus's mature tree canopy.



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# Results

## Phase I delivers on *community* and *educational goals*



### Achieving the Six Master Plan Goals

Each of the six guiding principles established during the master planning process is directly reflected in the completed Phase I design:

- 1. Create a college-like campus:** The four-story building, central ornamental stair, and bold material palette establish a collegiate identity that distinguishes Memorial from a typical high school.
- 2. Provide outdoor learning spaces:** The landscaped courtyard, shaded by the campus's preserved tree canopy, offers informal space for collaboration, meals, and respite.
- 3. Feature large gathering commons:** The two-story dining hall and adjacent commons serve as the social heart of the building, hosting daily meals, performances, and school-wide events.
- 4. Maintain and elevate the existing connection to nature:** Over 500 trees were preserved and 137 planted, informing the building's layout and reinforcing the site's wooded character.
- 5. Design spaces for high levels of learning:** Classrooms and labs feature glass walls for transparency, flexible layouts, and collaboration alcoves, putting education on display.
- 6. Improve traffic and pedestrian flow:** A dedicated drop-off route, separated bus lanes, and reorganized student parking reduce congestion for families and the surrounding neighborhood.

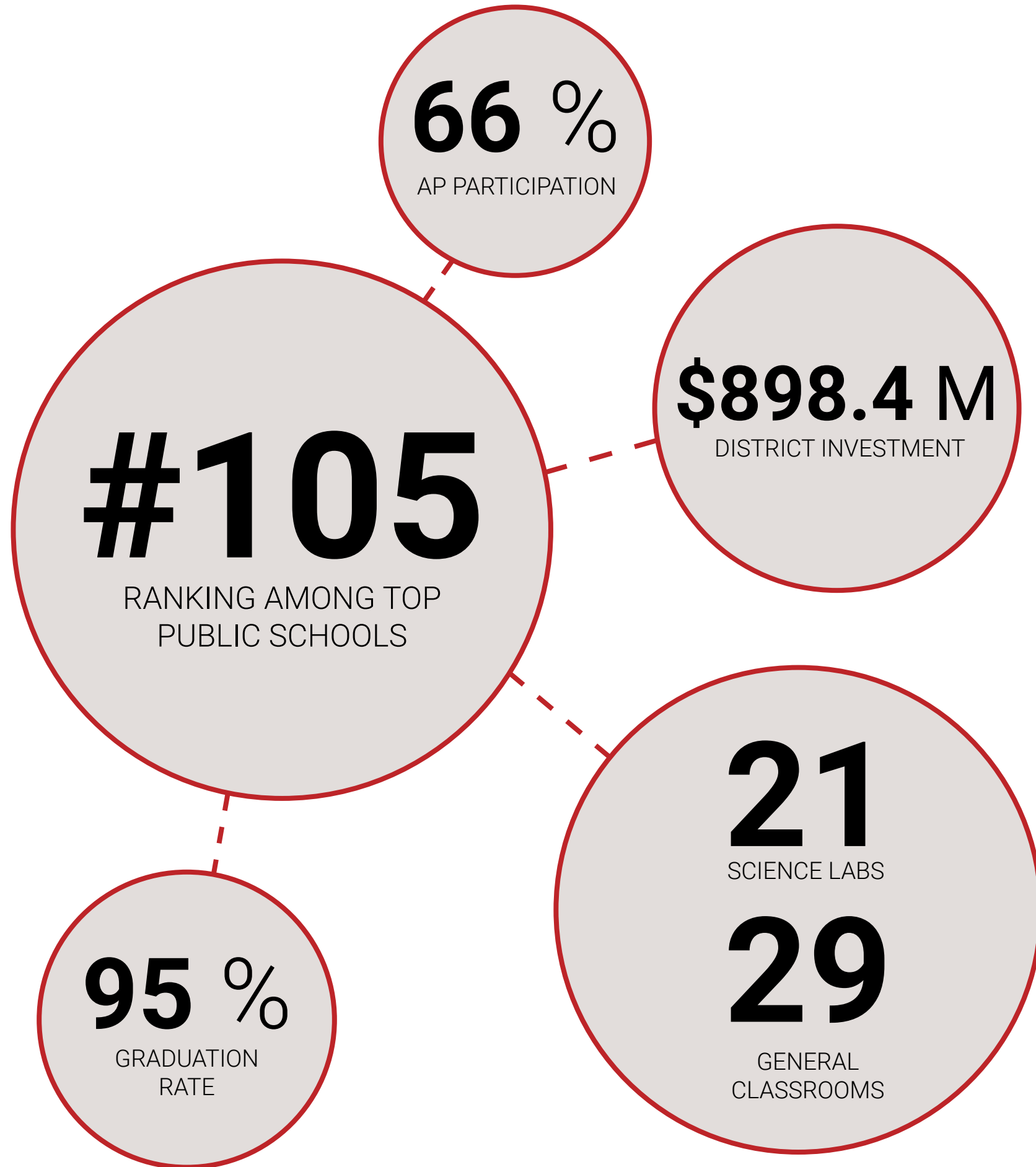
Critically, construction never displaced a single student, as demolition and construction schedules were coordinated to avoid temporary classrooms entirely. This momentum, and continued alignment to the master plan goals, will advance with the future development on campus.

# Results

## Achieving School Network Goals

Memorial High School ranks among the top public high schools in Texas, as #105 statewide per U.S. News, with a 95% graduation rate, 66% AP participation, and an overall score of 95.24 out of 100. The Phase I design supports and reinforces this trajectory by providing:

- **21 science labs and 29 general classrooms** that replace aging 1960s facilities with modern, flexible instructional space
- **Collaborative learning environments**, from hallway alcoves to flex spaces, that support the active, project-based instruction the school's high-performing student body demands
- **A model for Spring Branch ISD's broader bond program**, demonstrating how phased construction on a landlocked campus can modernize facilities without disrupting operations, a replicable approach for other schools in the district's \$898.4 million investment.



# Results

## Achieving Community Goals

The community asked for a school that matched its expectations and voted overwhelmingly to fund it. The Phase I project delivers on that trust:

- **A campus the community can access and enjoy:** Gathering spaces are designed to welcome use beyond school functions, fulfilling the stakeholder vision of a school that becomes a desired destination.
- **A better neighbor:** Traffic improvements, including dedicated drop-off and bus lanes, address longstanding congestion that affected residents and families alike. The building's scale is broken down through material variation and a four-story height limit negotiated with local government to respect the residential context.
- **A preserved landscape:** The campus's 500+ mature trees remain, maintaining the wooded, park-like character that makes the site a neighborhood attraction.
- **A source of pride:** From the red Mustang sculpture to the bold architectural expression visible from the street, the building is a physical reflection of the community's identity and investment in its future.



Phase I transformed the campus.

*Phase II will complete it.*



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