

2012 Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

Baker Middle School

Tacoma, Washington
New Construction

BLRB Architects

Baker Middle School



A Community School

Community Environment:

Situated in the heart of a diverse, economically disadvantaged neighborhood, Baker Middle School has twice made the list of Washington's lowest-achieving schools. Children from military families comprise approximately 25% of Baker's student body, contributing to higher than average turnover and new student induction rates each year. The site was undersized and confined to a 5 acre property boundary

Baker also serves a significant number of deaf and hearing impaired, special needs and bilingual students and hosts a parks department before-and-after school program.

The replacement structure and site solution allows all learners the opportunity for increased academic performance. The academic wings allow "flex" to respond to the swing in annual enrollment. Health and fitness for the students and neighborhood has been greatly improved with the 13-acre site development.

Photos:

Overall Building; Aerial // new Baker MS (L) with existing Baker MS being demolished for future athletic fields



A Community School

Community Environment: *continued*

From its park like grounds, shared use athletic fields, walking and bike paths and after hours access, Baker serves as an integral part of its South Tacoma community and a neighborhood anchor. The school's design is contemporary, enduring and timeless in form, safe and secure and will provide a sustainable, maintainable and technologically forward educational environment that enhances student learning and inspires a sense of pride and ownership among students, staff and the community.

The commons | Lunch room is at the center of this replacement school and exhibits multi-use functions for the school and community. Performing arts and dance programs are bolstered while large expanses of transparency encourage outdoor learning in new courtyards.

Photos:
Commons with Stage/Cafeteria View; Exterior Courtyard

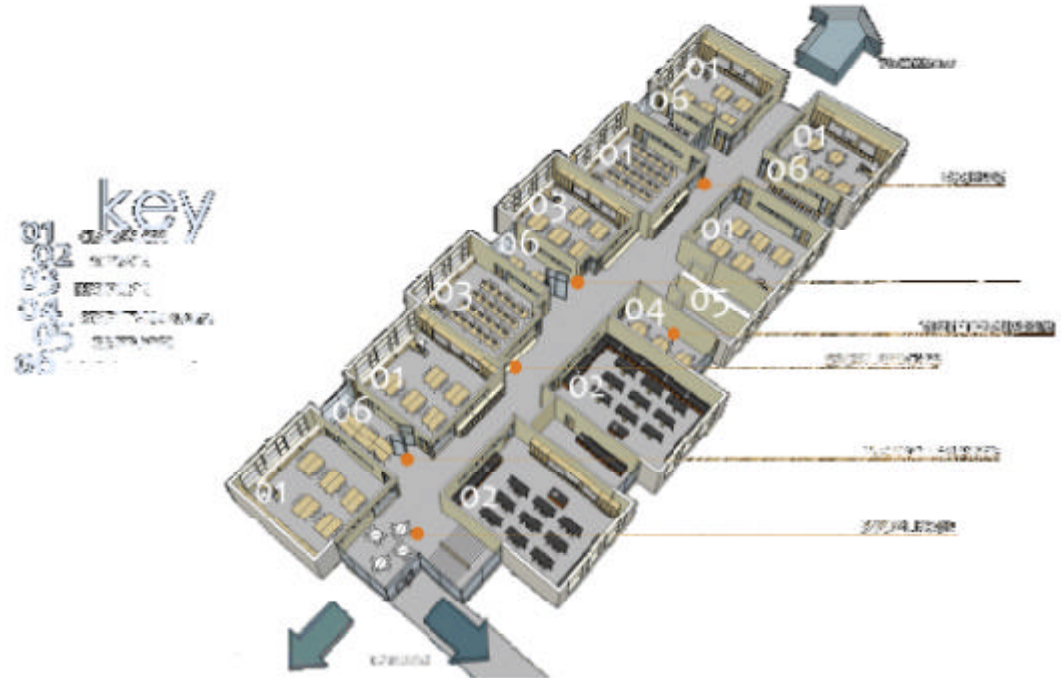


Learning Communities

Learning Environment:

Baker's design features grade level organization via small learning communities and controlled integration of sixth grade students with older students in elective programs. Each personalized learning community includes six general purpose classrooms, two science classrooms, a learning resource center and support spaces.

A higher than average ratio of one small group space per two classrooms in each learning community facilitates the school's programmatic emphasis on individualized attention and collaborative teaching. Large glazing and operable partitions between classrooms and corridors enhance supervision of both breakout and corridor space. Open gathering spaces support age-appropriate social interaction and supervised relationship building are provided in the upper grade level communities.



Photos:
Social Nook; Learning Community Axon; Shared Learning Space

Small Group Instruction

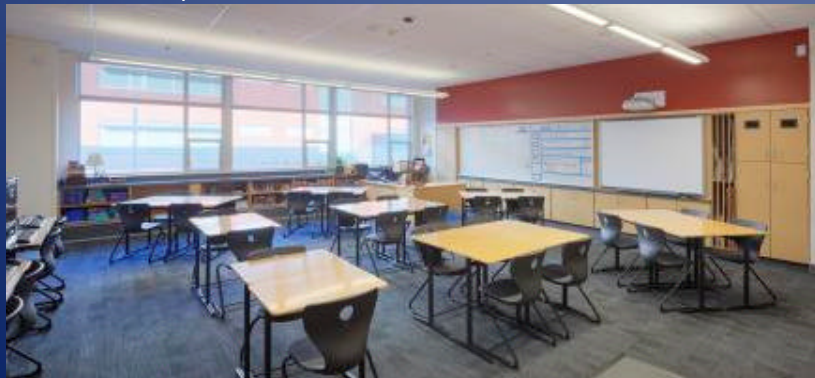
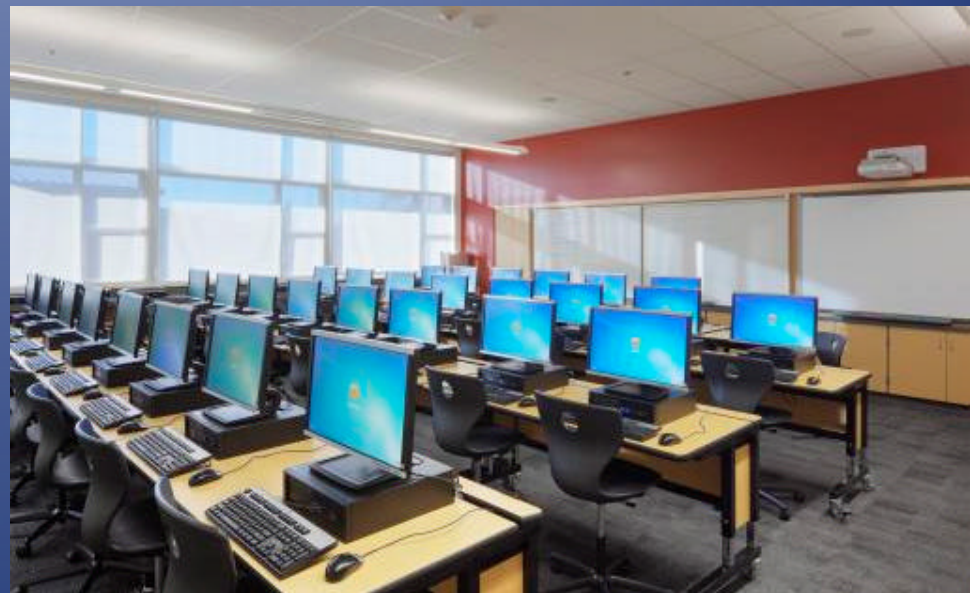
Learning Communities

Learning Environment: *continued*

Specialized instructional spaces are integrated throughout the learning communities and include deaf and hearing impaired classrooms with video instructional support space, an adjustment program classroom with life skills appliances for students with physical disabilities and English language learning classrooms for individualized instruction and tutoring.

All of Baker's classrooms feature integrated Learning Walls featuring contemporary, interactive instructional technology including digital projectors, interactive Smart Boards, video and audio enhancement systems and component storage. Wireless technology has been integrated throughout the school, enhancing flexibility and technology access.

Photos (*clockwise from top right*):
Science Lab; Computer Lab; General Classroom

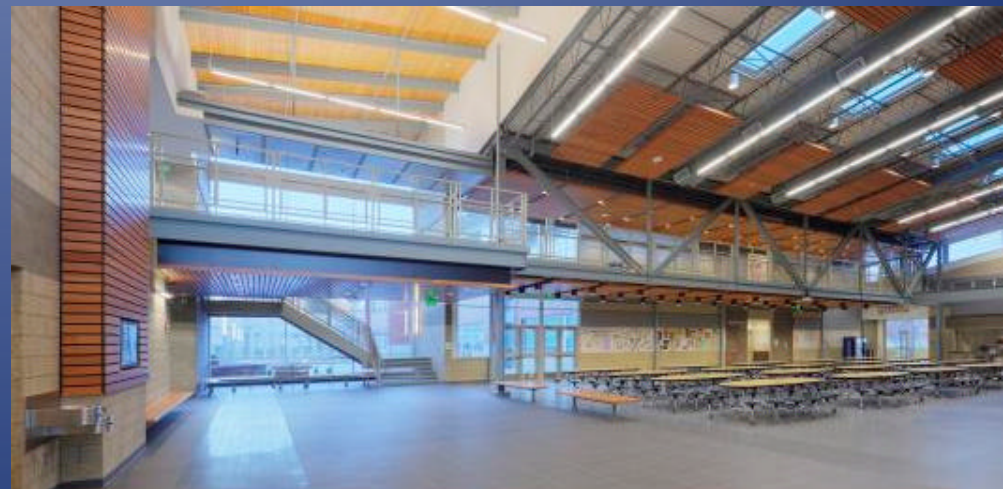


Physical Environment

Daylight and Transparency:

The building exterior is scaled and modulated to be in context with its surrounding single family residential neighborhood. The two-story multi-wing design organically creates multiple outdoor gathering and teaching areas and a half-acre interpretive/environmental education space is located on the northwest corner of the site, bounded and transected by pedestrian paths for school and public use.

Upon entry, the high volumes and infusion of natural light that are the hallmark of the school's design are immediately apparent. Bridges and balconies connect learning areas and unify the interior common areas. The transparency of the administration area adjacent to the public entrance presents a welcoming facade for all who enter and enhances passive security and supervision. Display space for student work, recognition of achievement and school events builds a sense of community and identity, and an information center welcomes new students, parents and visitors.



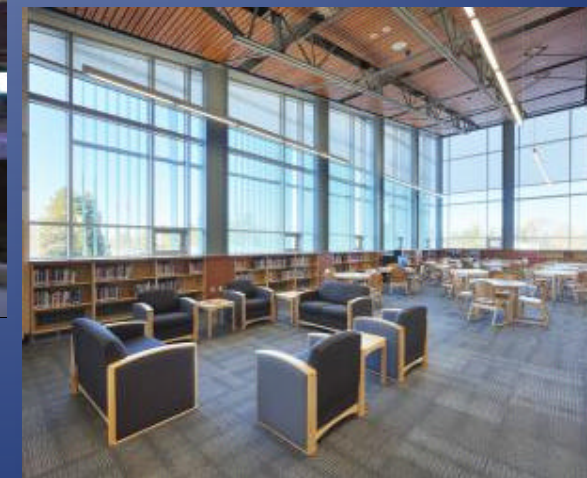
Photos (clockwise from top right):
Main Entry; Commons; Administration/Reception; Bridge to Learning
Communities

Physical Environment

Sustainability:

Environmental stewardship and energy conservation were baseline values throughout Baker's design and construction. Sustainable design elements include site preservation, on-site timber reclamation for interior architectural features, storm water management including permeable paving and rainwater harvesting utilizing a cistern collection system, high performance mechanical systems including a ground source geothermal heat exchange system and heat recovery units. Themed environmental graphics reinforce conservation values, illuminate recycling procedures and identify recycling stations interspersed throughout the school.

To measure the effectiveness of conservation strategies and make them accessible for students, Baker features an integrated Building Dashboard. The dashboard, which can be viewed at school on a touch screen display or via the Internet, provides real-time measurement of energy and resource consumption and an explanation of the school's sustainable features. This unique teaching tool provides a tangible means of measuring conservation efforts and involving the entire school community in stewardship strategies.



Photos (clockwise from top left):
Recycle Station; Building Dashboard in Commons; Daylight in Library;
Rainwater Collection/Runnel in Courtyard

Healthy Choices

The focus on the body and mind in harmony determined that the redeveloped project provide first class health, fitness and recreational opportunities. Studies and data show that only 3 out of 10 students are getting adequate daily exercise.

A larger site (13-acres) allowed for well scaled outdoor play spaces as well as state of the art competition facilities.

The gymnasium is subdivided into 3 teaching stations. The locker room zone is located equal distances to the indoor and outdoor active zones. PE and school sporting themes are bolstered with team colors and graphic detailing. The rich tradition of the bulldog pride has been carried forward in the replacement school.

Passive cooling with a constant flow of cool Northwest air maintains the balance and harmony of the body and mind by constantly refreshing the space. Even on a very warm day the space feels cool because of the continual air movement.

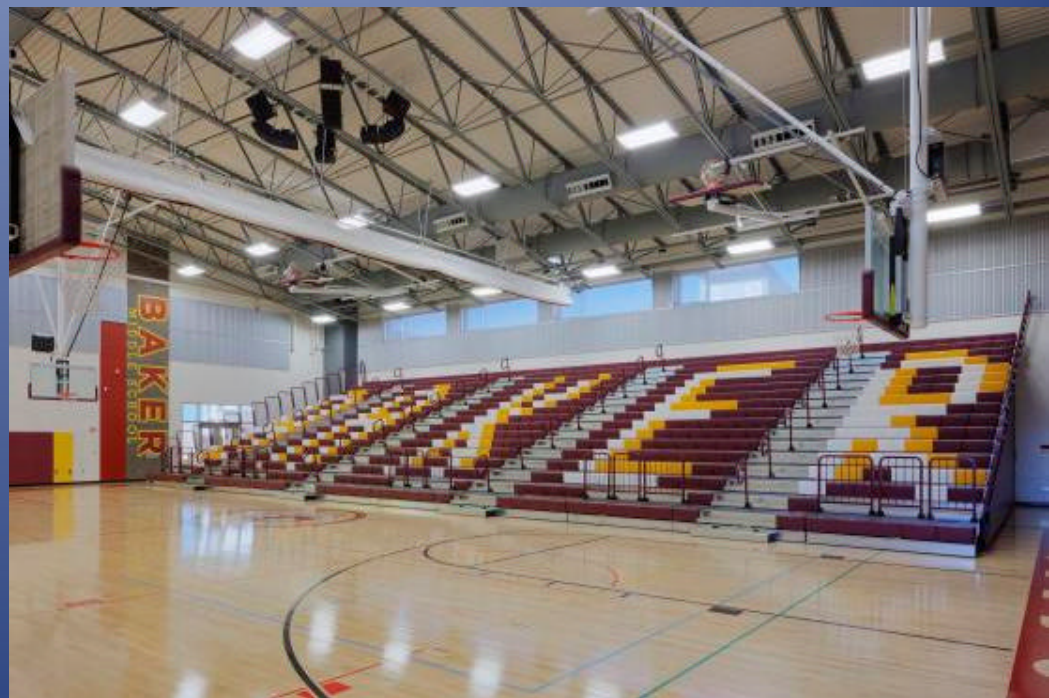
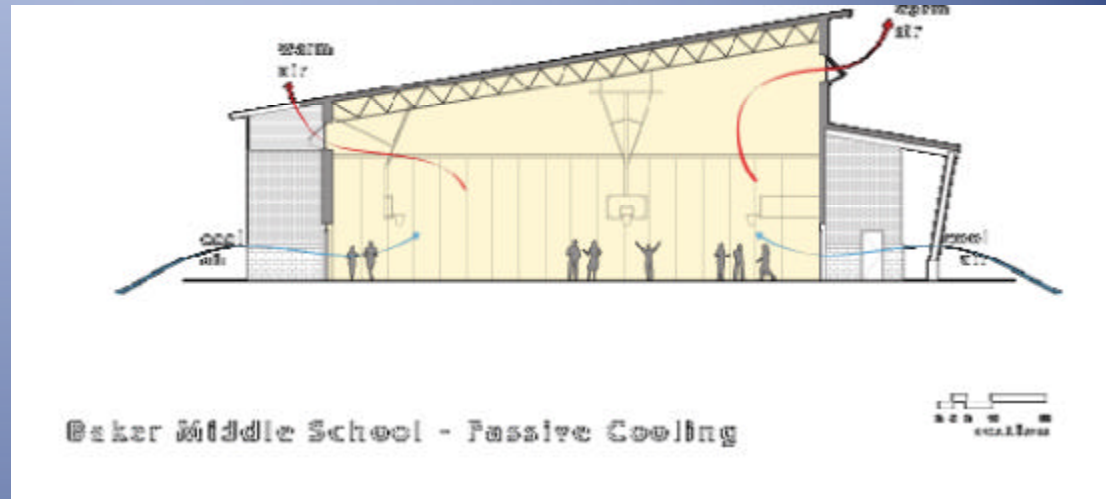


Photo:
Baker's Gymnasium

Inspiring a Community

Planning Process

In March 2009, the district engaged BLRB Architects to facilitate the planning and design of a replacement middle school that would be built on the existing site and create an educational environment that fosters personalized learning and the individualized attention that will enhance the achievement and scholastic success of Baker's 750 students.

The design team facilitated an extensive public outreach process presenting a 13-acre design solution that includes significant outdoor components and public use achieved community support, allowing for the permanent expansion of Baker's site and construction of the replacement while maintaining classes in the old school.

Photos:
Design Charette with Planning Committee; On-Site Design Studio with Students



Student Entry — from bus loading

Planning Process: continued

As identified by the 22-member planning committee, community integration and access, safety and security, creation of a welcoming, inspirational and personalized educational environment, provision of collaborative teaching opportunities and instructional flexibility, a technology-rich learning environment and sustainable, high-performance design were the leading goals for Baker's design.

Site zoning and internal security barriers allows this facility to be used on evenings and weekends. The gym and locker rooms are on emergency power circuit and made available to this South Tacoma neighborhood when there may be an extended loss of essential services.



Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

Project Data

Submitting Firm :	BLRB Architects
Project Role	
Project Contact	Thomas L. Bates, FAIA
Title	Principal-in-Charge
Address	1250 Pacific Avenue, Suite 700
City, State or Province, Country	Tacoma, Washington 98402 USA
Phone	253.627.5599
Joint Partner Firm:	
Project Role	
Project Contact	
Title	
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City, State or Province, Country	
Phone	
Other Firm:	
Project Role	
Project Contact	
Title	
Address	
City, State or Province, Country	
Phone	
Construction Firm:	Berschauer-Phillips Construction Co.
Project Role	General Contractor
Project Contact	Derek Boysen
Title	Project Manager
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City, State or Province, Country	Tumwater, Washington 98512
Phone	360.754.5788

Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

Project Details

Project Name	Baker Middle School
City	Tacoma
State	Washington
District Name	Tacoma Public Schools No. 10
Supt/President	Arthur O. Jarvis, Ed.D
Occupancy Date	January 2012
Grades Housed	6-8
Capacity(Students)	750
Site Size (acres)	13 Acres
Gross Area (sq. ft.)	118,320 SF
Per Occupant(pupil)	157.76 SF/Student
gross/net please indicate	gross
Design and Build?	No
If yes, Total Cost:	
Includes:	
If no,	
Site Development:	\$6,500,000
Building Construction:	\$26,900,000
Fixed Equipment:	
Other:	
Total:	