

# 2012 Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

## The Neighborhood Academy

Pittsburgh, PA  
High School  
New Construction  
Stantec

# The Neighborhood Academy



Photography by Alexander Denmarsh



## Community Environment

The Neighborhood Academy is a private school located in Pittsburgh, PA whose mission is to “break the cycle of generational poverty by preparing low-income youth for higher education.” This mission includes providing a holistic college-prep education for students in grades 8-12 and developing their minds, bodies and spirits so that they might become fully productive members of society.

## Community Environment Continued

The Academy's unique approach includes an extended school day (8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.), very small classes, close and ongoing communication with families, and a college-preparatory curriculum that culminates in senior seminars in the humanities and sciences. To help students succeed academically, the Academy also provides counseling, transportation, three meals a day, and assistance with emergency needs like medical care. To foster these goals, the new facility was designed with 500 SF classrooms, a full-service kitchen, spaces for student counseling, visiting family members, and other areas for the unique challenges facing low-income students.

The faith-based, non-sectarian academy operates primarily by donations, supplemented by minimal tuition. The Academy utilized a non-linear funding strategy that included establishment of an endowment fund and development of an indoor soccer venue leased to area organizations. This strategy provides a revenue stream to sustain the Academy.





## Learning Environment

The Academy believes in a holistic approach to education focusing on each student's spiritual, academic, artistic and athletic growth. Each of these aspects of student life are practiced and celebrated daily. The new campus features spaces that are both specific to and cohesive with each of these pursuits. Classrooms and labs are arranged at the perimeter of the building and include glass garage doors that allow the educational space to extend into the corridors and provide for a variety of teaching and learning modalities. A gaming station is located outside of the labs to facilitate learning through movement and play utilizing technology. Clerestory windows allow natural light to penetrate the interior spaces and provide a connection with the natural environment. The media center is located adjacent to the dining area in order to establish a student life center focused on collaborative learning. The dining area includes an indoor/outdoor fireplace and casual seating and a specially designated seating area for seniors. The art studio includes an outdoor patio that can be used for outdoor work, and student artwork is displayed throughout the facility.

# Physical Environment

The campus is constructed on one of the last remaining naturally wooded sites in the East End of Pittsburgh. Because the students come from very urban areas, it was important for the campus to maintain connection to this sylvan aesthetic and make nature a part of the student experience. For example, the academic and athletic buildings are purposely separated, allowing students the opportunity to experience nature as they transition between buildings. The Academy intends to develop this transition with community gardens in the future. Both buildings are designed as simple pre-engineered structures in order to minimize construction costs.

Locating classrooms at the perimeter and the worship and art spaces at the center maximizes educational utilization of the corridors by minimizing circulation.

At the heart of the Academic building is the worship space. This is sacred ground used for only two purposes: morning worship and senior presentations. Windows are strategically placed as a constant reminder of the core purpose, the inspirational dialog, and to look forward to their final presentation prior to going on to higher education.





## Planning Environment

The school operated for many years in a leased facility. That facility was less than ideal to support the curriculum. During the planning process visioning and discovery sessions were held with the school's students faculty and staff in order for the design team to understand the curricular and cultural needs of the academy. Design charrettes were held throughout the process to engage the students faculty and staff to develop a design that meets the unique needs of the Academy.



Every space within the school is used for educational purpose.



Student artwork is celebrated throughout the Academy.



Gaming is used as a learning tool to support differentiated instruction for kinesthetic learners



The traditional classroom extends into the corridors. Garage doors provide privacy when needed but also allows supervision of extended learning environments.



Educational utilization is maximized through extended collaborative learning in the corridors. Circulation through these spaces is minimized by perimeter classroom locations, providing a single loaded corridor effect.



An indoor soccer field is leased to community groups to provide a revenue stream and provide a sustainable future for the Academy.

# Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

## 2012 Project Data

Submitting Firm :	Stantec
Project Role	Planning, Architecture
Project Contact	Rob Pillar
Title	Principal
Address	101 E. Diamond Street, 400 Morgan Center
City, State or Province, Country	Butler, PA
Phone	724-477-1212

Joint Partner Firm:	Murray and Company, Inc.
Project Role	Non Linear project financing
Project Contact	Rick Murray
Title	President
Address	300 North LaSalle Street, Suite 4925
City, State or Province, Country	Chicago IL 60654
Phone	312 444-2020

Other Firm:	
Project Role	
Project Contact	
Title	
Address	
City, State or Province, Country	
Phone	

Construction Firm:	Massaro Corporation
Project Role	General Contractor, Design Build MEP
Project Contact	Joe Massaro III
Title	President
Address	120 Delta Drive
City, State or Province, Country	Pittsburgh PA
Phone	412-963-2800

# Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

## 2012 Project Details

<b>Project Name</b>	The Neighborhood Academy
<b>City</b>	Pittsburgh
<b>State</b>	Pennsylvania
<b>District Name</b>	Private
<b>Supt/President</b>	Jodie Moore, Rev. Thomas Johnson
<b>Occupancy Date</b>	September. 2012
<b>Grades Housed</b>	8-12
<b>Capacity(Students)</b>	150
<b>Site Size (acres)</b>	7.75 Acres
<b>Gross Area (sq. ft.)</b>	Total 56,300 Academic 24,600 Athletic 31,700
<b>Per Occupant(pupil)</b>	375 SF
<b>gross/net please indicate</b>	Gross
<b>Design and Build?</b>	yes for MEP
<b>If yes, Total Cost:</b>	\$8, 400,000
<b>Includes:</b>	
<b>If no,</b>	
<b>Site Development:</b>	
<b>Building Construction:</b>	
<b>Fixed Equipment:</b>	
<b>Other:</b>	
<b>Total:</b>	\$8,400,000