

2013 Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

Baker Middle School

Tacoma, Washington
New Construction

Baker Middle School



Baker Middle School

Community Environment:

John S. Baker Middle School is a high performance school tailored to fit the unique neighborhood context. Maintaining the spirit of John Baker and his civic legacy, the new school carries a strong vision of serving Tacoma's young citizens - four gateways are marked in the student commons, which feature the history of Mr. Baker's contributions to the Tacoma community.

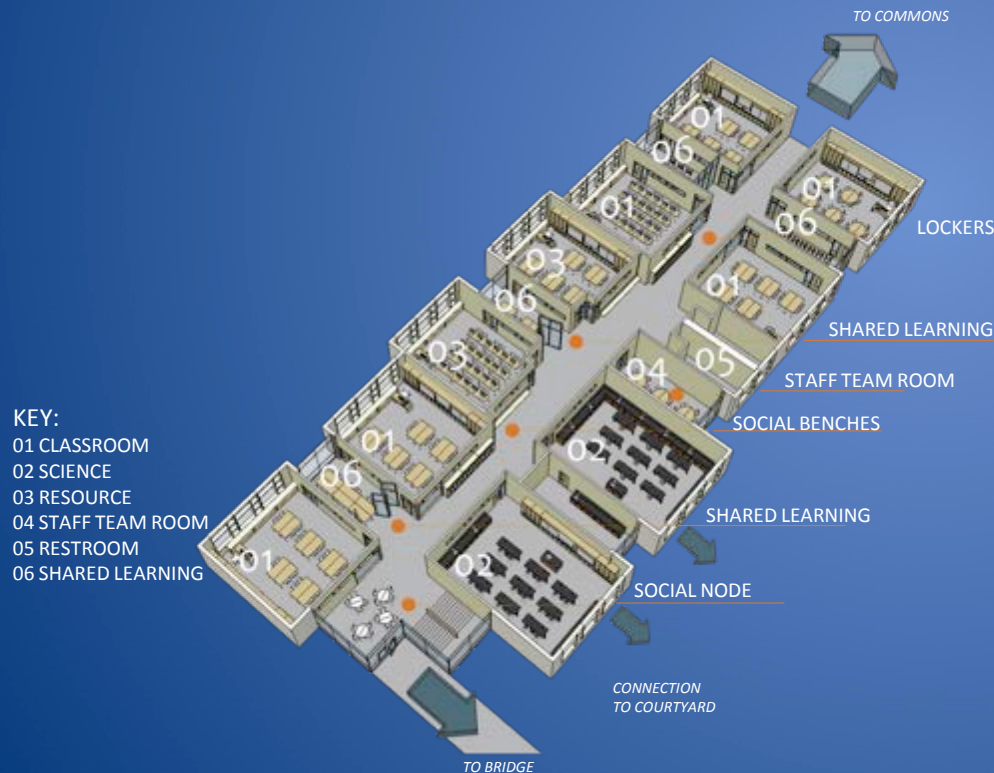
A formal land trade proposal was initiated by the school district in May 2009 whereby the district exchanged eight acres adjoining another school site for the construction of a new community center, in return for the eight-acre Harmon Park adjoining the Baker Middle School site. The design team facilitated an extensive public outreach process presenting a 13-acre design solution that includes significant outdoor components including lighted walking and bike paths, shared use athletic facilities and other amenities for public use to supplant the loss of the former park. The site and building design solutions were crafted to save existing mature Douglas Fir trees. These outdoor facilities will be a lasting and timeless civic asset to the surrounding neighborhood and will serve as a tangible connection between the middle school and its community.



Learning Community

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.



Photos (clockwise from top right):
Social Node; Science Lab; Learning Community Axon

Learning Community



Photos (clockwise from top right):
Shared Learning; General Classroom;
Music Room

Daylight and Transparency

Physical Environment:

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.



Photo: Main Entry

Daylight and Transparency

Physical Environment *(continued)*:



Photo: Courtyard

Warm and Friendly Entry

Physical Environment *(continued)*:

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. Countertops for the administration reception desk are made from timber salvaged from trees on-site.



Photos (from left): Administration; Main Entry



Warm and Friendly

Photos: Commons/Stage/Food Service



Warm and Friendly

Photos: Library



Sustainability

Physical Environment *(continued)*:

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 recover units, zoned mechanical controls, low flow plumbing fixtures, motion and occupancy sensor-controlled lighting, transparency, daylighting and natural ventilation via operable windows in classrooms and other areas.

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 (<http://buildingdashboard.com/clients/bakerms>), 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)*: Recycle Station; Building Dashboard; Exterior Courtyard



Listen, Connect and Collaborate

Planning Process:

In March 2009, the district engaged the architect 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.

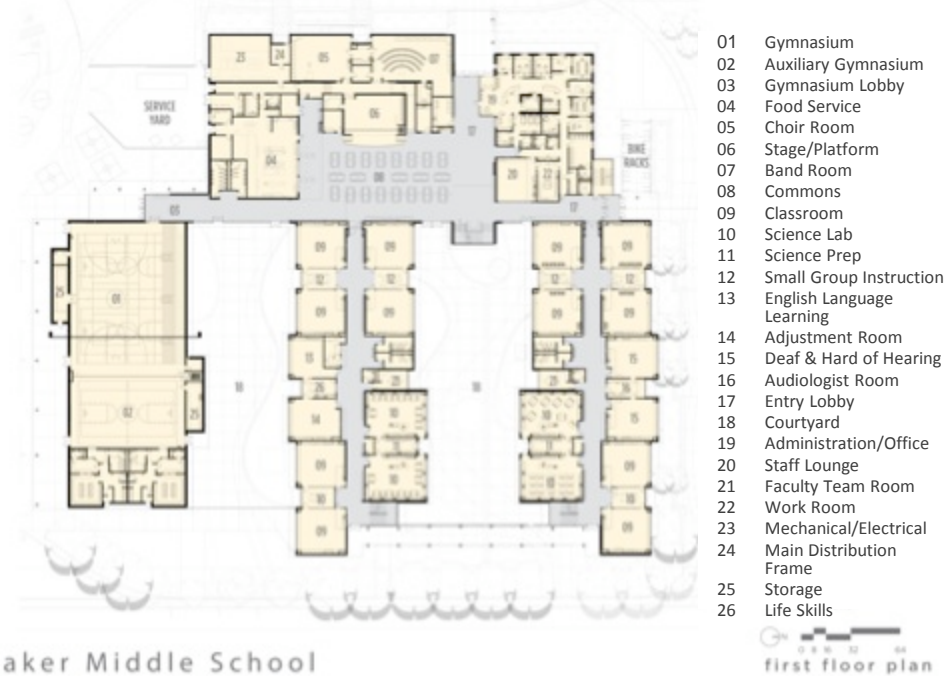
As identified by the 22-member planning committee, saving of the existing mature Douglas Fir trees, community integration and access, safety and security, creation of a welcoming, inspirational and personalized educational environment, provision of collaborative teaching opportunities and instructional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



Photos (clockwise from top): Design Charette with Planning Committee; On-Site Design Studio with Students

Site and Space Planning

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 circuits 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	Architect
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	
Address	
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
Address	2823 29 th Avenue SW
City, State or Province, Country	Tumwater, Washington 98512
Phone	360.754.5788

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Project Details

Project Name	Baker Middle School
City	Tacoma
State	Washington
District Name	Tacoma Public Schools No. 10
Supt/President	Carla Santorno
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:	