

2016 Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

Alvarado Junior High School

Category: New Construction

Alvarado Independent School District

Alvarado, Texas



ALVARADO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

SITE PLAN

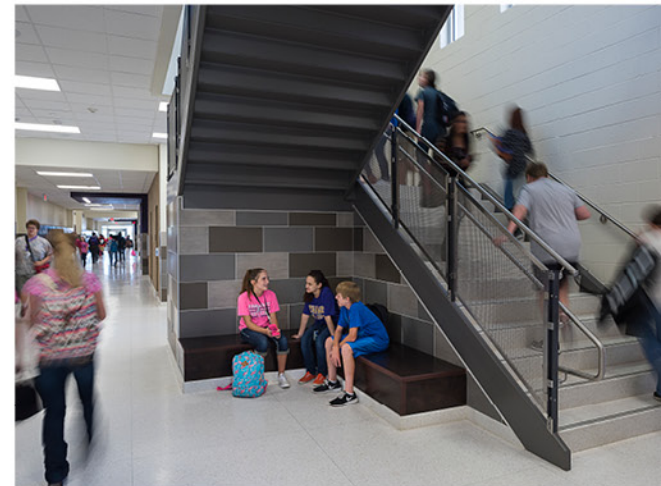
The new junior high school was constructed on a 35-acre site, adjacent to existing facilities that remained occupied during construction.

Master planning of the site focused on improving the comprehensive-use campus, while also maximizing a restricted footprint for the new junior high school.

The design team aligned the school on an east-west access, with a south-facing front entry. The orientation allowed extensive daylighting with minimal glare and heat gain.



- 1 New 121,000 sf facility constructed on an existing site
- 2 Demolition of existing junior high school took place following construction of the new facility
- 3 A portion of the existing school was re-purposed into a multi-use facility
- 4 Well-planned circulation and parking availability improved logistics for public-use activities
- 5 Site plan included improved drainage and addition of a detention pond



COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

The design of Alvarado Junior High School represented the first step in the transformation of the district's approach to educational delivery. A modern aesthetic—achieved with the use of glazing, metal panels, masonry and decorative finishes—establishes a brand that represents the evolving academic philosophy of the school district, bringing extensive value to the small community. Connectivity was also a key theme for the campus—manifesting in visual connectivity with the use of interior and exterior window systems, as well as in physical connectivity with the inclusion of multiple seating options to promote spontaneous interaction. Wide hallways contribute to the openness and easy flow of student traffic.



COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

The site plan and design of the junior high school focused on creating a local destination; the facility's proximity to the district stadium and central location within the town made it a prime option for community gatherings. Thoughtful placement of parking lots outside, and athletic facilities and communal spaces inside, complemented the location of the stadium. Shared amenities such as the large open cafeteria—connected visually with a commons and the gymnasium—create event space for athletics, fine arts and community activities.



COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

The cohesive brand is apparent inside the facility as well. Modern materials and furniture were selected to functionally and aesthetically support evolving educational delivery, which focused on collaboration, flexibility and choice. Students have options to engage in small-group, large-group and self-reflective activities, creating a learning community that supports innovation and co-creation.



LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The facility sets a new standard for educational delivery and design within the school district, acting as a template for future design programs. The approach evolves teacher-focused learning into facilitated, project-based learning. Each space is structured to allow students choice and flexibility in their academic day, a concept that reflects secondary and post-secondary educational environments.



LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The academic wing anchors the facility and is divided into three learning neighborhoods. Each 2-story neighborhood features eight classrooms, an outdoor learning courtyard and two “living rooms” for academic and social engagement. Living rooms are connected vertically, allowing 7th graders on the first floor to interact with 8th graders on the second floor.



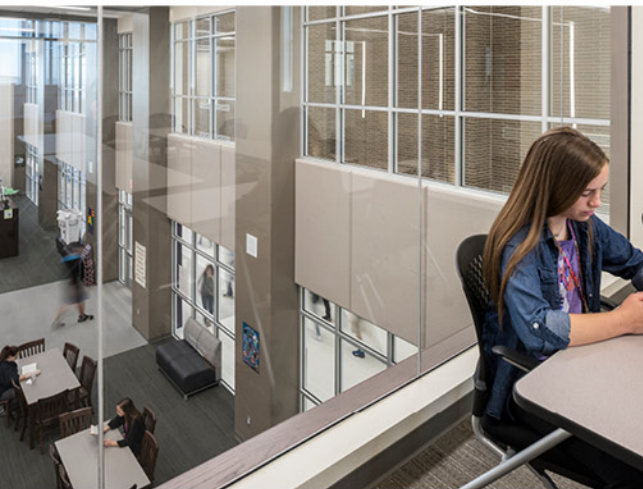
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The media center is a high volume space that offers views into all corners of the building. Transparency in the space promotes “learning on display” and increased visual connectivity. Within the media center, a “Genius Bar” creates informal space for group and individual study. Writable surfaces and access to technology allow students to act as technological “geniuses” for peers, allowing them to solve problems and generate ideas in an interactive way.



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The school is a compact, 2-story facility that features learning neighborhoods, a flexible-use media center, thoughtfully placed fine arts and athletics, outdoor learning courtyards and a footprint that allows the district to expand classroom space in the future. Sited to face south, the orientation and use of shading devices allows for ample daylighting, while minimizing glare and heat gain. Extensive window systems and clerestory windows are prominently used in each space, providing interior and exterior views.



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The rooftop courtyard is one of four enclosed outdoor learning classrooms that support small group interaction, socialization, science experiences and active learning.

The second story study room and teacher planning room overlooks the media center, contributing to the “learning on display” theme that is prevalent throughout the campus. The space allows for student-to-student interaction, professional development for teachers, tutoring and mentoring opportunities or as an alternative classroom environment for break-out groups.



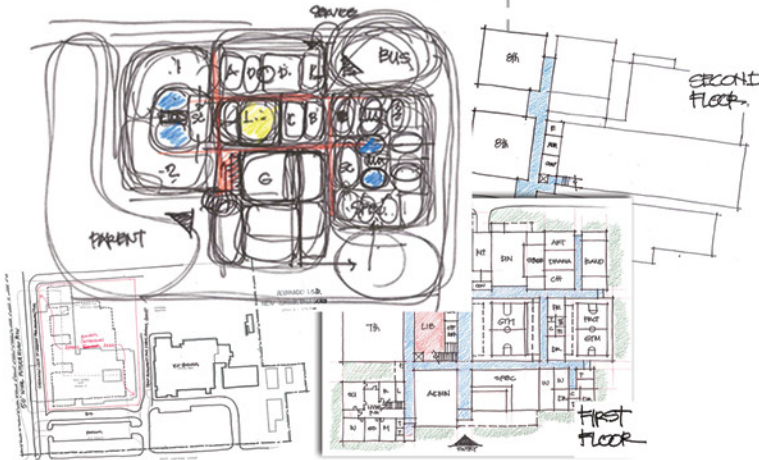
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Athletics and fine arts are spaced appropriately from the academic areas, allowing for natural sound barriers for active learning environments. The weight room, athletic locker rooms and coaches' offices are located adjacent to the tennis center, gymnasium and competition stadium.



BRAINSTORM AND ANALYZE

IDEAS



PLANNING PROCESS

Prior to the start of planning, the client anticipated designing around a traditional approach to the learning model. Throughout a design-team-led visioning process, they realized the opportunity to provide more for their students.

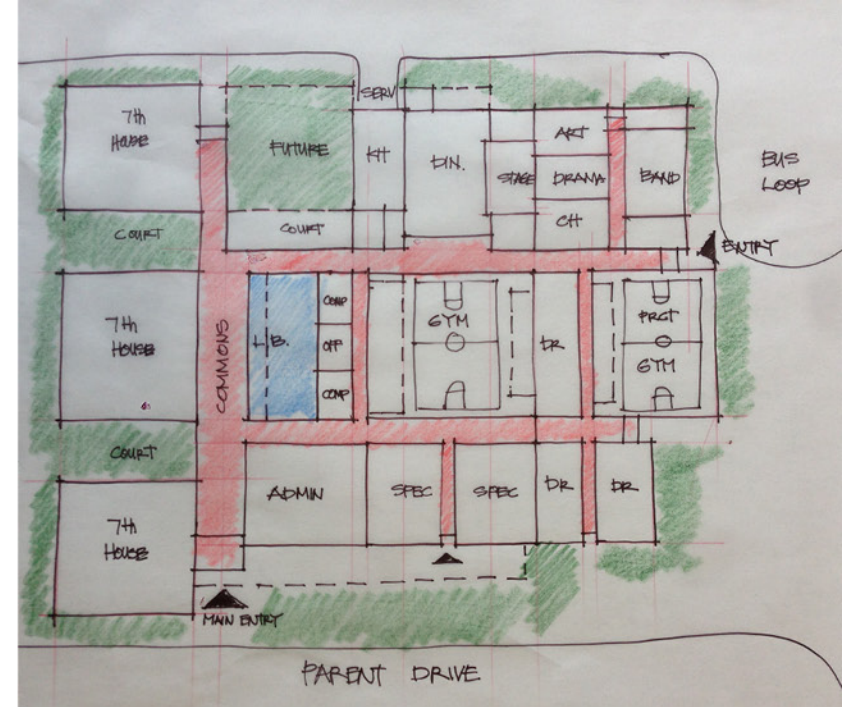
Scrapping the original plan, the project team and school district began to talk through a more comprehensive solution that would evolve educational delivery and provide more flexibility, choice and multi-modal learning in the instructional day.



PLANNING PROCESS

The design of the new junior high school represented the first step in this transformative vision. A primary challenge was to incorporate an innovative design that would achieve the required program, while remaining within a tight budget. The design also required consideration for future growth.

During a 2-day design charrette with administrators and staff, these challenges were addressed by focusing on function and how users would interact within the space on an academic and social level. The result was a compact, 2-story facility that featured learning neighborhoods, a flexible-use media center, thoughtfully placed fine arts and athletics, outdoor learning courtyards and a footprint that allowed the district to expand classroom space in the future.





FLOOR PLAN—FIRST FLOOR



FLOOR PLAN—SECOND FLOOR

SUBMITTING FIRM	
Project Role	Prime Firm
Project Contact	Konrad Judd, AIA, LEED AP
Title	Director of Design
Address	801 Cherry Street, Suite 500
City, State or Province, Country	Fort Worth, Texas 76102
Phone	817.377.2969
JOINT PARTNER FIRM	
Project Role	N/A
Project Contract	N/A
Title	N/A
Address	N/A
City, State or Province, Country	N/A
Phone	N/A
OTHER FIRM	
Project Role	N/A
Project Contract	N/A
Title	N/A
Address	N/A
City, State or Province, Country	N/A
Phone	N/A
CONSTRUCTION FIRM	
Project Role	General Contractor
Project Contract	Scott Trcka
Title	Senior Project Manager
Address	4200 Beltway Drive
City, State or Province, Country	Addison, Texas 75001
Phone	972.432.9969

Project Name	Alvarado Junior High School
City	Alvarado
State	Texas
District Name	Alvarado Independent School District
SUPT/PRESIDENT	Dr. Kenneth Estes
Occupancy Date	May 2016
Grades Housed	7-8
Capacity (students)	750
Site Size (acres)	31.52
Gross Area (sq. ft.)	121,000
Per Occupant (pupil)	161
Gross/net (please indicate)	Gross
Design and Build?	No
If yes, Total Cost	
Includes:	
if no,	
Site Development:	\$143,494
Building Construction	\$4,454,702
Fixed Equipment	\$17,712,518
Other:	
Total:	\$27,210,743