Recent High School Planning and Design Projects

LAWRENCE HIGH SCHOOL
Lawrence, Massachusetts

The design of this new 3,000-student, 565,000 square foot high school incorporates Johns Hopkins University's 'Talent Development Program' – a comprehensive reform model for the planning and design of high schools in large, diverse urban communities. The program addresses the issues that, according to current research, are typical of large, often under-performing urban schools, including discipline and security; anonymity and social estrangement; failure, especially in the ninth grade; and high drop-out rates.

The Talent Development Model's essential components include Career Academies, each with a specific professional development focus; and a Ninth Grade Success Academy to provide students with extra academic and social support as they make the transition into high school. After completing the ninth grade, students have a choice of four Academy programs including Health and Human Services, Applied Science and Technology, Business Management and Technology, and Arts and Communications. The design team looked to the City of Lawrence to define each Academy program, soliciting input from local business leaders during the planning process. Along with a rigorous core college prep curriculum, the Academies provide students with work-based internships supported by local industry partners.

Additional program elements include a Media Center, a 1,252-seat Auditorium and adjoining dance studio, a Field House with three full-size basketball courts and an indoor track, a Health Center, and four Day Care/Child Development Centers for the children of students and staff – a convenience that gives students with children the means to continue their education.

The design is a campus-like complex composed of multiple building forms flanking a curvilinear spine running north to south. The six Academies are housed in separate four-story wings, radiating outward along the east side of the spine, providing all classrooms with an abundance of natural light and creating outdoor courtyards between each wing. Flanking the west side of the spine are two public wings, oriented toward the city fabric and designed for extensive community use. The circulation spine spans North Parish Road on the second level, resolving a major site constraint, while connecting the Academies with all major resources.

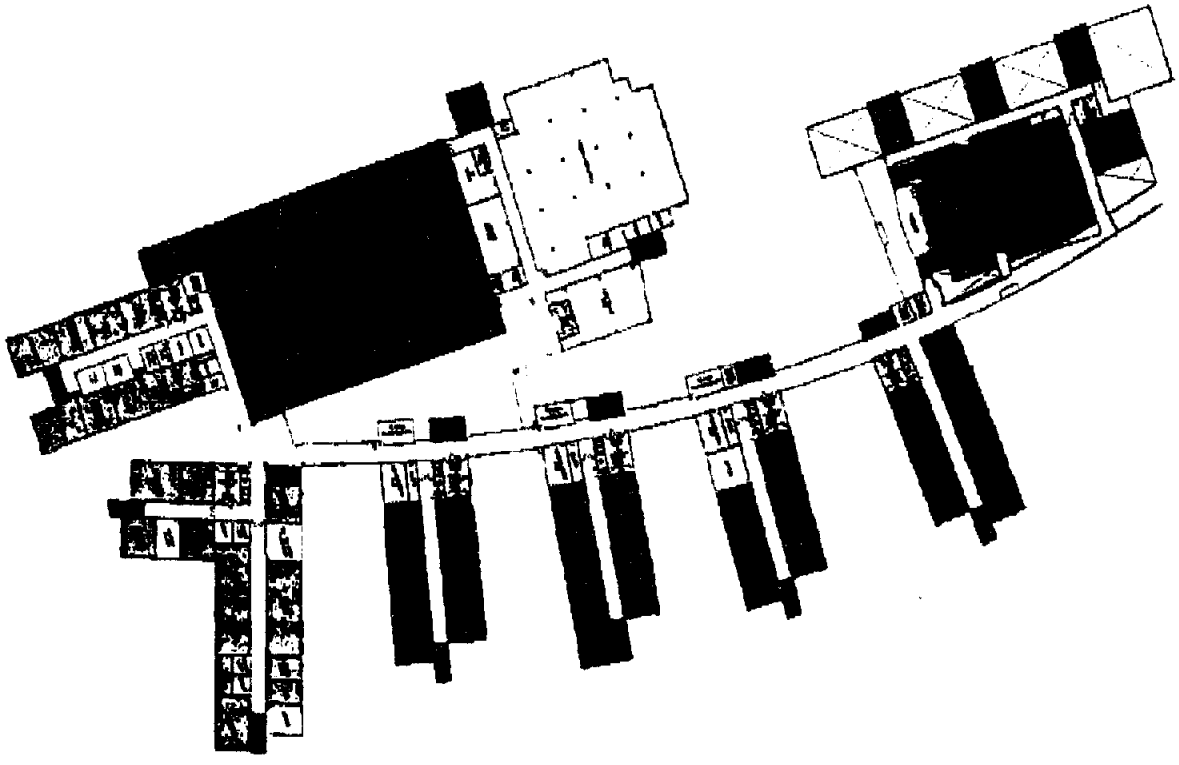
In plan, massing and materials, the design references Lawrence's rich textile manufacturing heritage. By the early twentieth century, Lawrence had become a world leader in the production of woolen textiles by harnessing the power of the Merrimack River via a system of underground water raceways and canals. The building plan's curvilinear spine incorporates the canal metaphor, and the Academy wings are conceived as simple mill buildings. The spine is composed of polished zinc panels that create the illusion of water in motion, contrasting with the Academies, which are clad in face brick and block reminiscent of the old mills.

Estimated Construction Cost: $87M
Estimated Completion Date: 2005

Reference: Mr. Kevin McCarthy
Building Project Monitor
Lawrence Public Schools
978-975-5900, x309

Lawrence High School

Lawrence, Massachusetts



This new 545,000 square foot high school is a forward-looking design that supports a specific educational philosophy tailored to the needs of the local business community. The plan is composed of four 400-student, career-oriented Academies housed in separate four-story academic wings with shared core facilities.

Based on John Hopkins University's 'Talent Development Model,' the program offers its 2,900 students a choice of four specialized learning environments including. Health and Human Services, Applied Science and Technology, Business Management and Technology, and Arts and Communications. A separate 'Ninth Grade Success Academy,' provides ninth graders with extra academic and social support as they make the transition from middle school to high school.

The distribution of functions within the new facility were influenced by the impact of the immediate site, (a buffer of land between the city edge and the highway). The plan organizes the four Academy wings on a radial axis extending outward from a central hub, providing classrooms with an abundance of natural light and creating outdoor courtyards between each wing. The separate Academies are linked at the second level by a gentle curving circulation spine, reminiscent of both the city's historic canals and the highway that exists at the perimeter of the site.