

# **Jenks Unlocked: A Vision for the J.S. Jenks Academy Reach Project**

In our school environment, the community should support the emotional and physical well-being of every student who walks through the doors. Currently, nearly 50% of middle schoolers report significant stress related to schoolwork, and depression rates among students aged 12–17 are spiraling. At J.S. Jenks Academy, we refuse to let these unfortunate results define our community. Our team is proud to present Jenks Unlocked, a SchoolNext Project designed to transform our school into a better learning environment.

## **Our Mission: Preserving History, Building the Future**

Our mission is rooted in a deep respect for our peers. J.S. Jenks is a building with historical value, and our goal is not to erase its character but to highlight its form. We have focused our efforts on strategic additions rather than structural changes, ensuring the vision of our school stays intact while the building remains historic. Adding a student lounge, in addition to separating the gym and cafeteria, would modernize our outdoor and indoor areas as well as help make our peers more eager to learn and happier to be here.

## **Behind the Scenes: The Planning Process**

This project was constructed from hard- work and determination. Our team met every Tuesday during clinic meetings (which is the last thirty minutes of the school day) and every Friday morning from 7:30 to 8:15.

We began by surveying the student body to identify their views of the school. The data was clear; students felt the weight of academic stress, were frustrated by the combined cafeteria-gym space, and felt the outdoor areas and bathrooms were in poor condition. To gain a 360-degree perspective, we conducted interviews with our principal, Mrs. Scoili, our IB coordinator, Mrs. Younis as well as various staff members, parents, and students from both the elementary and middle school levels.

## **From Blueprints to 3D Reality**

Once the needs were identified, our architectural team went to work. Stella Fell, Sam Graveley, Odessa King, Tien Klein, and Jordan Silverstein took on the task of using a rangefinder to measure the school. Including the collaboration center, to ensure every detail we drew was accurate and realistic. These measurements were translated into detailed blueprints. Michael Colston then took the process a step further, utilizing AI via Gemini to refine the drawings and Kleki to fix errors, resulting in a high-precision architectural blueprint of our school.

To help the jurors visualize the transformation, Taitu Joslyn and Michael Mendez utilized Tinkercad to create a digital 3D model. This design was then brought to life using the 3D printers in the school's art room, providing a physical representation of our twenty-four-month

vision.

## The Three-Floor Expansion

Our proposed renovation introduces a three-story addition that optimizes space and addresses the specific needs of the community:

- **The First Floor; The Cafeteria:** We are finally separating the cafeteria and gym. By relocating the lunchroom to the new addition, we freed up the original gym for full-time athletic use. The new cafeteria includes an upgraded work-station, two new bathrooms, and a layout that accommodates two classes at a time. Also including a direct exit to the yard ensuring a seamless transition to recess.
- **The Second Floor; The Student Lounge:** This is the heart of our mental health initiative. The lounge is a dedicated chill and study area. Upon entering, students are greeted by a community seating area with bean bags, couches, and floor pillows. The space features a vending machine for snacks, a bookshelf divider to separate quiet study space from social areas, and a SmartBoard for student presentations.
- **The Third Floor- The Library and Collaboration Center:** Connected to the lounge via a switchback staircase, the top floor houses our library and IB classes. This floor serves as a professional workspace for staff meetings and group projects, providing desks for Mrs. Younis and Ms. Goldsmith while keeping the library's extensive collection accessible to all grades.

## Sustainability and Infrastructure

A modern school must be a green school. We have selected materials and systems that protect the planet while improving the learning environment:

- **Eco-Friendly Turf:** Our outdoor area will feature a sustainable turf alternative, allowing for more sports teams and clubs to develop.
- **Renewable Flooring:** We have chosen bamboo for our interiors, a durable-water-resistant, and highly renewable resource.
- **Climate Control:** We would be installing a High-Efficiency VCF (Variable Control Furnace) HVAC system. It is nearly impossible to focus when you are hot or cold between the seasons; so this system provides precise temperature control to keep students focused in our new addition.
- **Solar Energy:** High-efficiency solar panels will be installed to lower electricity bills, allowing those savings to be reinvested back into student programs.

## The Roadmap to Completion

We have organized the "Jenks Unlocked Project" into a clear, **24-month timeline**:

1. **Phase 1 (Months 1-6):** Design, Permitting, and Historic Preservation checks to ensure all additions honor the building's historic characteristics.
2. **Phase 2 (Months 7-18):** Construction of the building extension, addition of the eco-friendly field, and AC installation.

3. **Phase 3 (Months 19-24):** Interior finishing, including the lounge setup, vending installation, and final cafeteria renovations.

## **Conclusion**

Jenks Unlocked is more than just a mere “add-on” to the school; it is a commitment to our “Jenks Family.” This project has taught us about public speaking, architectural design, and the importance of community engagement. By accounting for every student’s requirements—from mental health to physical comfort—we are not just building a better school, but we are building a more connected, productive, and interactive learning environment for our fellow peers. Together, we are stepping outside the box to unlock the full potential of J.S. Jenks Academy!