

Fusion Academy

Tom Bodett once said, “In school, you're taught a lesson and then given a test. In life, you're given a test that teaches you a lesson.” We feel students should have the opportunity to experience their education, thus, we've designed Fusion Academy, a revolutionary way to “experience education”. Fusion Academy is an innovative community where students will learn and prepare for life beyond the typical classroom. Fusion is a project-based learning middle level school where students will be presented with opportunities to intern for companies directly inside their school building and will experience the concepts as they learn. Our mission is for educators and business people to mentor and empower all students so they may reach their full potential through collaborative and innovative experiences that will positively impact their community.

We began by utilizing a process that allowed us to focus on items that we wished we had during our own learning careers. We feel it is important to provide middle-level students with a sense of autonomy where they feel they can facilitate their own learning process and actually utilize the skills they are gaining. Thus, we have designed a school concept that “fuses” together education and real-life, *Fusion Academy*. Fusion Academy is not just an educational center, but also a venue where entrepreneurs can facilitate their business. Community and business people will have the opportunity to lease an office space within the building. As students at the academy master certain skills, they will be provided an opportunity to intern for the businesses within their community, directly at their school.

Our entire planning process took around three months. With a class of 32 students working on this project, we had no shortage of ideas. After creating lists of our “educational wishes”, we all agreed that our final idea would benefit more than just the students, but also the entire community. Once we had defined our purpose, we began researching and created vision boards of architectural concepts. Next, we defined the spaces we felt our building needed, each space serving a defined purpose. By utilizing bubble plot diagrams, “paper doll” exercises and blueprints we determined the best layout for the building. Our final steps included building a model of recycled cardboard and creating digital 3D models in Google Sketchup.

Fortunately, we didn't do this process alone! Mrs. Meghan Williams, a professional architect at Hollis + Miller, helped us focus our ideas. Mia James says, “Getting to collaborate and work with a real architect was an incredible experience and I know that I will be able to take what I have learned into the workforce. This opportunistic partnership is a perfect example of the building community we are attempting to create within Fusion Academy.”

Upon entering Fusion Academy one would be greeted by vaulted glass ceilings, radiant open spaces, circular aquariums, fountains and treed areas. In the center of the building, a courtyard, known as the Town Square, can be found. The Town square is equipped with several learning or meeting spaces that include flexible seating options. The diversity of these spaces allows for differentiated learning styles to excel. Office spaces to be leased by community members and businesses surround the open Town Square. The learning centers (also known as classrooms) are all located on the second level of the building. Each learning pod has an open floor plan, outdoor balcony, restrooms and garage doors to allow for larger collaborative space. The gymnasium, media center and restaurant styled cafeteria can be accessed through

glass hallways on the main level. The natural light our school will provide is proven to, “increase production and efficiency,” (Bristolite 2). The gated community and building is equipped with new level security features, solar panels and geothermal wells under the parking lot. The materials used will be very sleek and modern. All-embracing, our design for this school is environment-friendly. Modern furniture, one-to-one and new technology, and a vibrant atmosphere will make our school one of the best in the country.

A typical day in the life of a Fusion Falcon includes collaborative work on projects designed for them and by them to apply techniques and concepts they learned in their core classes. Another component of their day is the partnership with professionals. Students will hold meetings with community mentors, spend time outdoors with nature, enjoy healthy eating options and more. Students work at their own pace, with the guidance of a teacher, and are then presented with numerous opportunities. For example, when a student masters several math skills, they will have the opportunity to intern for one of the businesses, checking over their finances and directly utilizing the skills they learned.

Course options, cafeteria selections, grading system, bussing and transportation, special education settings, handicap accessibility, outdoor classrooms and security are only a few of the other topics we have prepared for this building. By connecting the community with this school, relationships between students, teachers and community members will be stronger. Learning will take place for all who are involved. Overall, this Fusion Academy is truly a school of the future.

Designed by:

Mrs. Rich's Professional Studies Class

Lakeview Middle School - 7th Grade

Park Hill School District - Kansas City, MO