

OLATHE WEST HIGH SCHOOL

OLATHE, KANSAS





PUBLIC SAFETY ACADEMY

Located off of the Learning Commons is the Public Safety Academy. Serving as a daily reminder of the importance of first responders, a remnant of a steel structural beam from the World Trade Center is on display at the entrance.

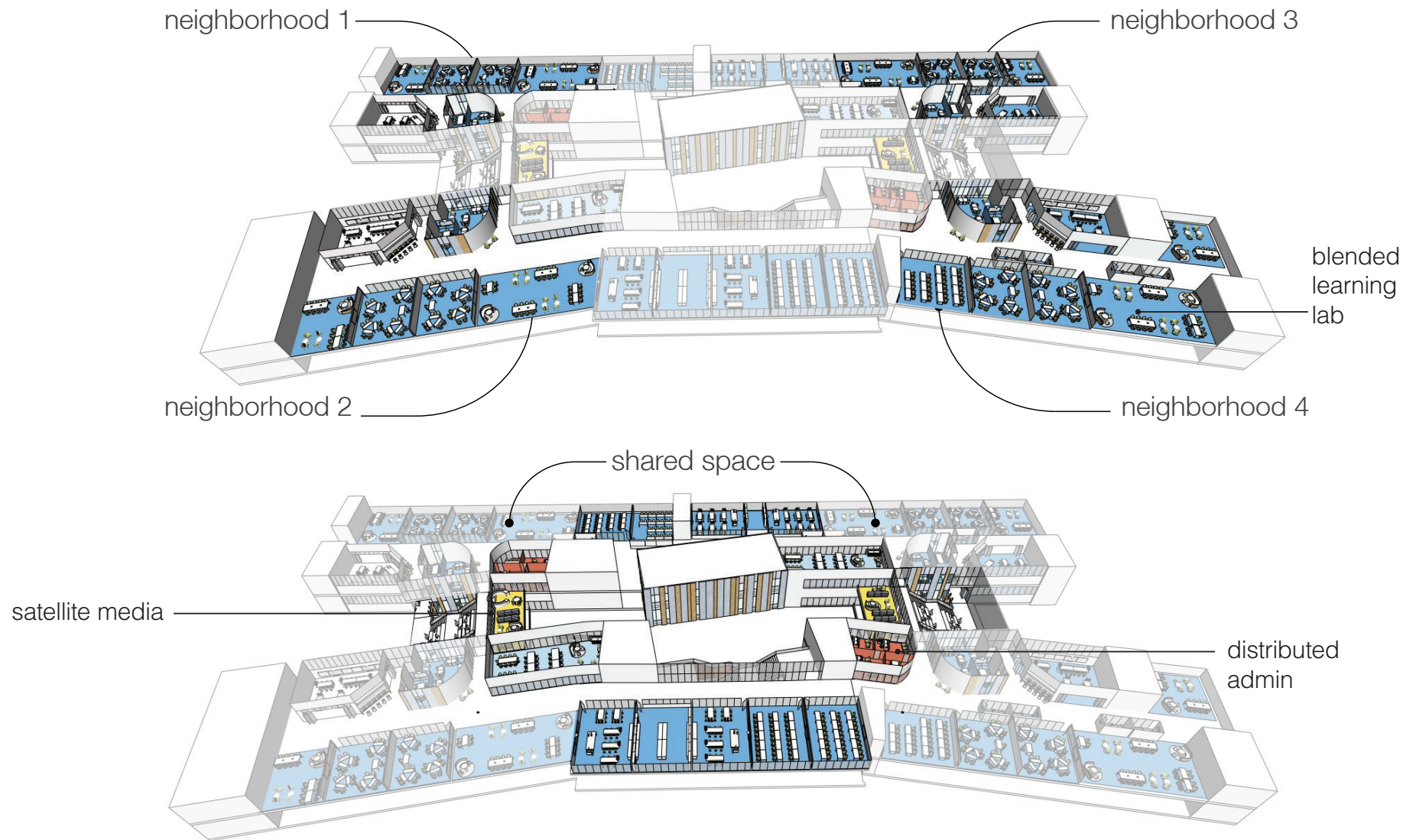
Flexible space created with durable surfaces and high, open ceilings connects to the outdoors through large overhead doors. By allowing career focused equipment, like ambulances, to enter the space, learning concepts are able to extend beyond the typical constraints of a building.



GREEN TECH ACADEMY

The Green Tech Academy is an opportunity to highlight technologies within the built environment as learning tools. The Green Tech doorway is highlighted with a Living Wall system maintained by students. On the 3rd floor, two Green Roofs are adjacent to the Horticulture Lab and Greenhouse. Housed on the green roofs is a water-harvesting cistern system that offsets watering of the greenhouse.





LEARNING COMMUNITIES



LEARNING COMMUNITIES: FLEXIBLE LEARNING

The school focuses on the use of technology and open, modular learning spaces to promote efficiency and collaboration among students. Grade levels are spread across four learning communities, each with three distinct classroom types: active learning spaces for direct instruction, blended learning spaces for project-based lessons, and maker spaces for hands-on classes. The neighborhoods surround a large instruction space for collaborative group work and large lectures.



LEARNING STAIRS



EDUCATIONAL VISION

At Olathe West High School, **learning is driven by the student**. It transforms learning into an environment that intrigues high school students' minds and stimulates creativity and collaboration.

PLANNING PROCESS

The district wanted its newest high school to be a building that acted as a learning tool, **supporting continuing advances in curriculum**. During 30-plus planning and design meetings, our team worked with over 90 district administrators, faculty and educators on visioning and planning concepts.

DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Flexibility and spatial variety are the foundational design components embedded into Olathe West, supporting a culture of personalization where the experience is **tailored by each learner's specific needs**. Teachers become coaches, serving students and facilitating learning through a variety of spaces and tools. Learning occurs through real-world simulations and problem-solving applications. Seamless technology enables students to interact with each other in entirely new ways.

CHALLENGES/SOLUTIONS

The challenge was to put dynamic learning on display. At Olathe West, the specialty 21st Century Career Exploration programs include hands-on, real-world learning centered around Green Technology and Public Safety. In the past, these classrooms weren't visible and got lost in the daily shuffle.

The solution was to bring these learning environments to the front of the building, where students have daily exposure to these possibilities as they consider their future careers.

The design of these spaces focused on flexibility for adapting learning methodologies and supporting different learning styles. Each Career Exploration area contains (1) open-concept Maker Space with (2) Active Labs and (2) Small Group Conference spaces.

COST EFFECTIVENESS

While the community investment to construct this new high school was substantial, the result is a state-of-the-art design that is unlike any other high school in the district.

INNOVATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Olathe West teachers don't own a classroom, but instead share spaces. A faculty planning room allows teachers to collaborate amongst each other. They have the opportunity to create lesson plans together and identify opportunities to co-teach.

When students walk into their learning community each morning, they check the schedules displayed on big screens to find out which classroom, lab or maker space they will be in that day. Each day is different: Will the day start by meeting classmates in a rooftop horticulture classroom? Will their English and History teachers combine their classes in a blended-learning classroom for that day's lesson?

GREEN FEATURES

Sustainability is a learning tool. Rainwater harvesting happens through a water cistern located on the Green Roof, which waters plants in the greenhouse.

Infrastructure for small-scale wind and solar panels were implemented for future use of the Green Tech Academy.

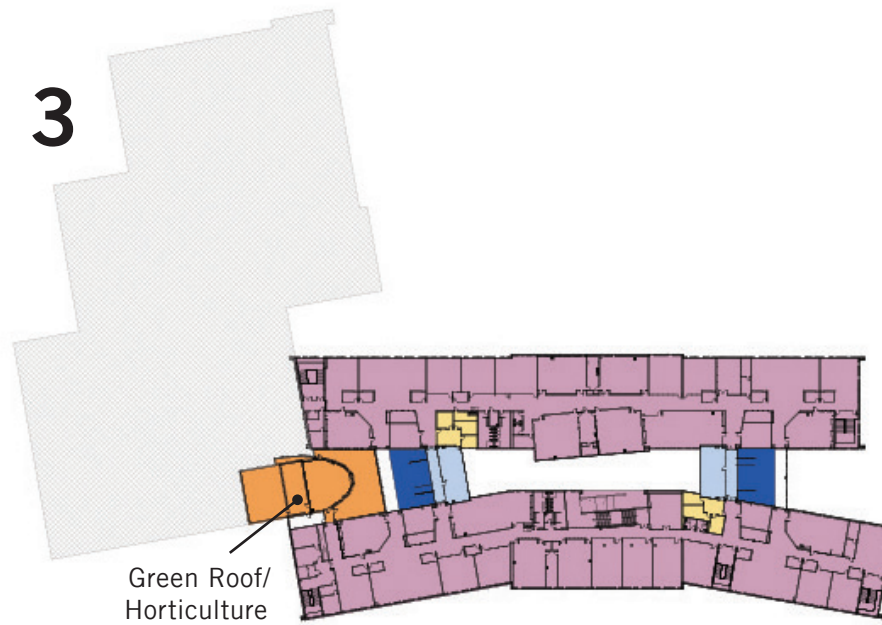
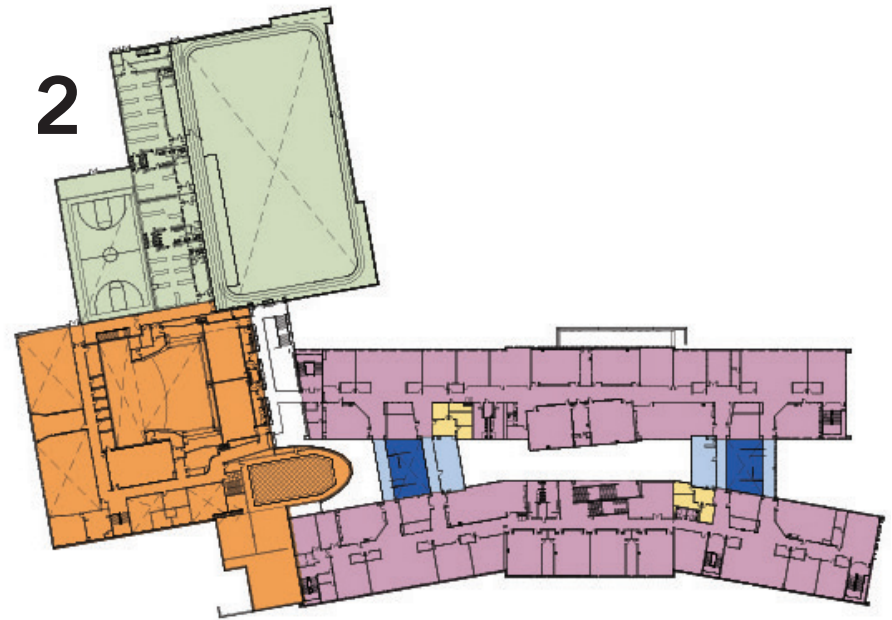
Olathe West is a facility “**driven by the student, facilitated by caring adults, supported by mentors and peers, with the parents and community as active partners.**”

-Olathe West Visioning Team



- Main School Building
- Green Tech Academy Outdoor Learning
- Athletic Playfields

SITE PLAN



- Specialization Classrooms
- Classrooms
- Learning Commons
- Learning Stairs
- Administration
- Support Spaces
- Athletics

FLOOR PLANS



LEARNING ON DISPLAY

An open concept Media Center, unconstrained by walls, bleeds directly into the Learning Commons, serving as an extension of the entrance and cafeteria during school hours. The open media center can be used anytime, and with 1:1 technology, eliminates the need for computer stations.



THE COMMONS

