



École Connaught Community School

Regina, SK, Canada

Little Leaders Lane
des des petits

École Connaught Community School

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The new École Connaught Community School is a cutting-edge 21st century learning environment that pays homage to the cherished 1912-era school it replaced on the same site.

Residents of Regina, Saskatchewan's Cathedral Village community have a rich history of French immersion education and active community involvement. The original École Connaught School served as the hub of the community for over a century and its wide hallways and high ceilings resonated with generations of learners.

Due to looming structural failure, the school board made the difficult decision to build a new replacement school in its place. Not only did the design team have to deal with a grieving community over the loss of their cherished school, it had a mandate to implement the school board's relatively new Structural Innovation Framework that challenged the traditional paradigm of school design.

The overarching design objective was to replace a beloved and historically significant community asset with a modern 21st century learning environment that respects and tells the story of the original École Connaught School. Facing considerable resistance from a highly motivated and passionate community with a strong emotional attachment to the original school, the design team implemented a robust and immersive integrated design process designed to gain the community's trust, learn about their unique community context, and transform their passion into constructive design input. The result is a unique and imaginative 21st century design solution that effectively encapsulates the community's hopes for the future while respecting and honouring its proud past.

The new École Connaught Community School is a 57,092 sq. ft. dual-track English/French immersion school boasting a wide variety of flexible student and teacher spaces that can be customized to meet the needs of different learning and teaching styles.

The school is organized around three learning communities (grades K-2, 3-5 & 6-8) that share a central learning and gathering space called Heritage Hall. This common area connects the daily activities of students, teachers and the community and features reclaimed elements from the original building and a space called History Alley. An after-hours entry to the building provides a secure access point to the multipurpose room, gym and kitchen for community events.

Heritage Hall houses a large internal feature staircase with integrated amphitheatre seating for individual class instruction or all-school assemblies. The eastern end of the hall contains a carpeted learning space with a high glass wall near the location of the main entrance to the original school. The surrounding walls feature murals from renowned local artist Wilf Perrault, honouring the history of the original building that once stood on the site.



Scope of Work and Budget

The design team provided a full scope of prime consultant, architectural and interior design services including pre-design, schematic design, design development, contract documents and contract administration. The design process relied heavily on community and education stakeholder engagement to establish a project charter that outlined the vision of the new École Connaught Community School.

Size

57,199 sq. ft.

Type

K-8 dual track School (English French Immersion), with Early Learning Centre.

Student Capacity:

425

Completion:

2017

Budget:

\$16 million

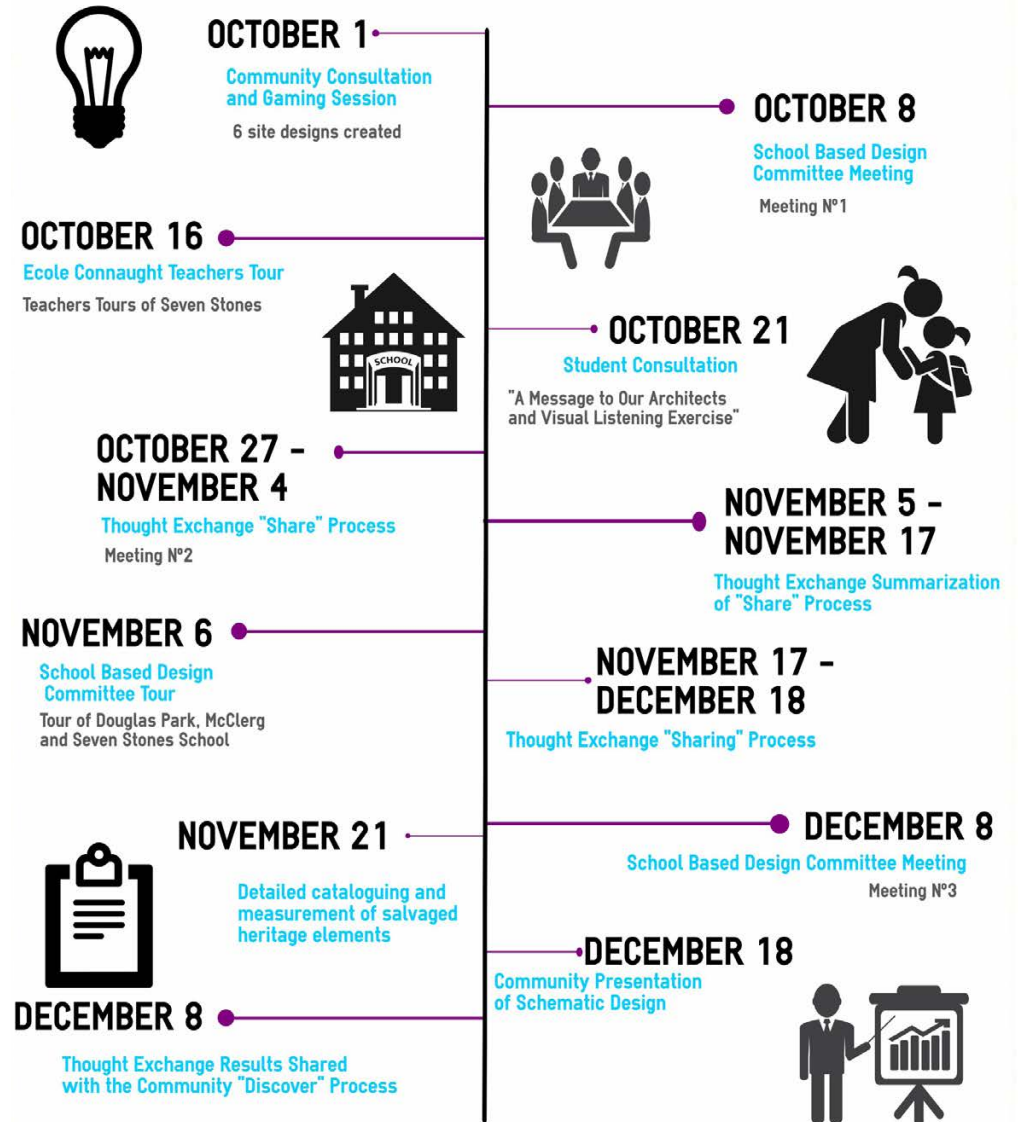
Sustainability Target:

LEED Gold (CaGBC Evaluation in Progress)

Location:

Regina, SK

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY MILESTONES



School and Community Engagement

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

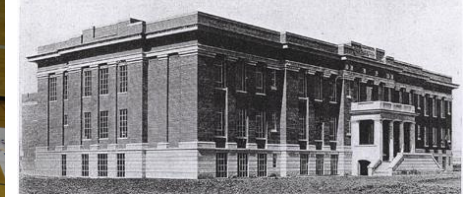
Regina's Cathedral Village neighborhood is a mature, tree-filled community with a rich history and an active, engaged and diverse residential population. The community is passionate about arts and culture and the area has a distinct architectural style. The area gets its name from the more than 100-year-old Holy Rosary Cathedral, which is a significant focal point in the area. The community contains a mix of turn-of-the-century houses, tree-lined streets, welcoming public spaces, well-maintained businesses, restaurants and boutique-style stores. Cathedral Village hosts numerous arts and culture related events throughout the year and residents take pride in the area's rich historic features.

STAKEHOLDERS

The project had a large, diverse, and active stakeholder group which required a high degree of skill and expertise to navigate. A unique feature of the stakeholder group was the School Based Design Committee – an active, well organized and passionate group of residents who were concerned with how a new school would fit into the historic context of Cathedral Village.

The entire stakeholder group consisted of:

School Based Design Committee	Public School District
Cathedral Village Residents	Saskatchewan Ministry of Education
Administrators	Local Business Owners
Teachers	Branch Library
Students	



School and Community Engagement

CHALLENGES

One of the most significant challenges was dealing with a vocal and passionate group of stakeholders who did not want the old school torn down and who were concerned that a new school might degrade the established look and feel of the historic neighbourhood. Residents were worried that the new school would be an 'ugly modern box' that would wipe out a vital piece of the community's history.

One of the driving design themes for the school is the important connection to the Cathedral Village neighborhood. Extensive consultation with community members provided several design priorities including:

- Telling the story of the original school
- Balancing traditional and modern expression
- Maximizing the size of playfields and outdoor public spaces
- Reducing the impact of a parking lot on 13th Avenue
- Designing a strong main entrance
- Respecting the Friendship Circle (blessed Indigenous element to be relocated on site)
- Establishing a strong presence on 13th Ave and Elphinstone St. (NE)
- Accommodating a dual-track French Immersion program

Additional Design Challenges Included:

- Celebrating the historic architectural character of the original school within the context of an innovative 21st century learning environment.
- Incorporating separation for English and French Immersion track learners, while also having shared spaces for the entire student population.
- Respecting the needs of a diverse user group and incorporating solutions that were suitable to all building users.



School and Community Engagement

ASSETS

In late November the Design Team prepared a detailed inventory of the reclaimed masonry elements that were saved from the original school building. This inventory is shown at right, and will become the “building blocks” for heritage features within the school and site design as it develops.

As the design progressed and people felt like their voices were listened to and factored into the design, the passion of community members became a major asset. Some of the most vehemently opposed community members became the new school’s most vocal supporters.

Another asset was the fact that the entire student and teacher population was relocated to a temporary school location while the new school was being built. The principal implemented several key change management initiatives that led to a more successful buy-in to the new facility.

While in their temporary facility, administrators, staff and students practiced:

- Using flexible teaching arrangements and instructional groupings.
- Teaching arrangements and instructional groups were regrouped on a regular basis.
- Teachers meeting collaboratively in teams to meet the needs of each learner.
- Teachers and learners working together to provide appropriate and quality instruction across grades and/or subject areas.



Local artist Wilf Perrault's images of street scenes at dusk with yellow-orange glowing windows animate the scenes and invoke a feeling of warmth in otherwise quiet alleys.



School and Community Engagement

THE VALUE OF THE PROCESS

The consultation process aimed to listen and respond to the concerns of the community and educators. Most of those who were originally opposed to the new school and we not aligned with 21st Century Learning concepts wholeheartedly supported and appreciated the final design outcome. Careful attention was paid to creating a feedback loop that communicated the method of response to the majority of concerns or wishes of the community.

The value of the process is when it results in a facility that 'fits' within its neighborhood ethos and supports its educational goals.

The passion and commitment of stakeholders ultimately led to a better project and a truly unique 21st century learning environment that immerses students and visitors in the community's history.

"We had a man that came to our community tour that was 98-years-old and he had attended Connaught (original school) and all his family had attended Connaught. And he had tears in his eyes when he came up to me. He said 'this is the hub of our community, and we were so worried that with new school design, it would sort of shut that hub down. The feeling of community in this building is like it had never been knocked down'. He just said, 'I'm home'."

*Lori Daelick, Principal
École Connaught Community School*



Educational Environment

EDUCATIONAL VISION AND GOALS

The planning and design of École Connaught Community School is founded on the Structural Innovation Framework developed by the school board and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. **The Structural Innovation strives to achieve the following:**

- Beyond One-Teacher, One-Classroom.
- Towards Improved Student Achievement.
- Professional Learning Communities.
- Intervention Problem Solving.
- Adaptive Leadership.

The key structural design innovations identified include:

1. Flexible Teaching Arrangements and Instructional Grouping.
2. Teacher Collaboration.
3. Interdisciplinary and Inquiry-Based Teaching and Learning.
4. Inclusive Practices.

The integrated and collaborative work by all disciplines during the design development phase allowed for a more efficient and integrated design, currently targeting a minimum of LEED NC 2009 Silver certification with a stretch target of LEED Gold.

Beyond this overarching framework, the integrated design process led to the formulation of project specific educational goals which became part of the project's guiding principles.

These included:

General Qualities

- Inviting and welcoming character.
- A design that tells the story of the community.
- 21st century learning environment adapted to a dual-track (English and French Immersion) program.
- Adaptable and flexible spaces based on 21st century learning principles.

Student Safety

- Site-lines that allow teachers and supervisors to effectively monitor and protect students at all times.
- Home-like family-style washrooms.
- Creating a sense of community within the school.

Effective Teaching and Learning Spaces

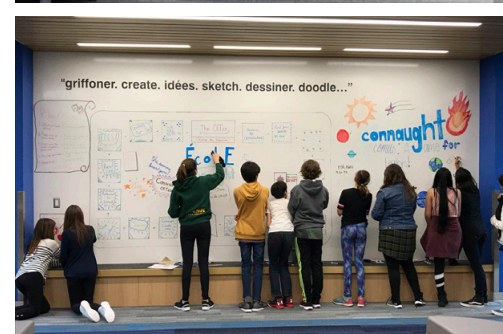
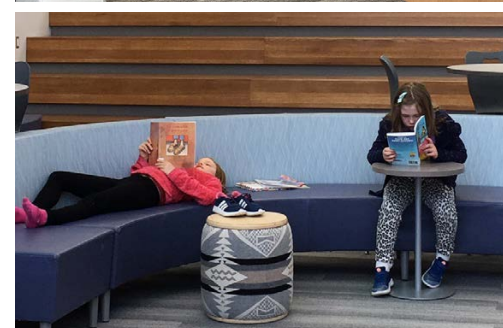
- A variety of flexible teaching and learning spaces to encourage stronger learning outcomes and support different learning styles.
- Design facilitates team teaching and project-based learning.
- Quiet areas for individual learning.
- Large, open areas for group work and socialization.

Student Comfort

- Designed to be accessible and welcoming to all students and visitors.
- Ample natural light and use of well-designed soft artificial lighting where required.
- High quality acoustics to enhance sound performance and promote better concentration and learning.
- Soft flooring and flexible furniture to promote casual learning throughout the school.

Inspire Creativity

- Colourful and vibrant spaces to stimulate the imagination.
- A variety of wet and messy areas.
- Displays for student artwork.
- Art and science Davinci Studios.





HOW THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS THE CURRICULUM

École Connaught Community School contains interesting and varied learning spaces to accommodate all teaching styles and student learning modalities. The facility creates flexible spaces for gathering, play, storytelling, independent focused study, quiet work and collaborative project work. Interconnection and glazing between various learning environments allow students and staff to feel connected to each other and promotes a sense of community.

An integrated wood amphitheater and stair connects Heritage Hall with the upper Cathedral Common learning space. The stair is the central spine and heart of the school and faces the beautifully treed view out to Elphinstone Street. Its position allows natural light to filter down to the media centre below and provides a variety of learning spaces for students of all ages along its path.

Special signage and graphics are also used to incorporate curriculum and school charter quotes directly into the learning environment. Examples include mathematics being displayed on stairway risers, and the naming of unique spaces like the "Learning Lounge" to help underscore the intended purpose of the space.

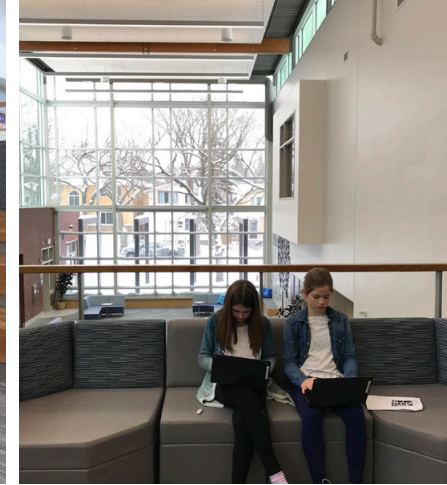


HOW THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS A VARIETY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLES

The design allows for ample break-out and collaboration spaces for both students and teachers. Each Learning Community has breakout and small group rooms that can be used by students for self-directed work or by specialized support workers and teachers for individual or small group activities and evaluation. Each space provides a balance of stimulating and quiet focus environments for students. Teachers in each Learning Community have individual professional workstations in a centralized Teacher Collaboration Space.

The central Heritage Hall and amphitheater provide a special presentation and performance space for the school and community, and are also well used as a quiet group break-out space. The Media Centre at the heart of the school opens onto one of the Learning Communities and includes a variety of furniture types and a series of quite "cave" spaces below the amphitheater stair.

On the 2nd floor, a rooftop exterior Terrace is included with decking and furnishings to provide a special south-facing break-out space with direct views to the mature tree canopy of the neighbourhood.



HOW THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IS ADAPTABLE AND FLEXIBLE

École Connaught Community School contains an abundance of break-out and collaboration spaces for both students and teachers. Each Learning Community has breakout and small group rooms that can be used by students for self-directed work or by specialized support workers and teachers for individual or small group activities and evaluation. Each space provides a stimulating environment for the students.

Since not all students learn the same, the school was designed with a wide range of flexible learning environments. Large glazed overhead doors connect the Learning Studio spaces, which allow teachers to expand their space when needed. Also, minimal built-in casework allows for flexibility in learning environments to a greater degree, relying more on with a variety of movable furnishings. In the Grades 6-8 learning community the lockers are clustered together in movable blocks with a counter height top, providing an additional work or display surface.

The Gymnasium has also been designed with an adjacent Fitness/ MPR space, which opens completely to the Gym for an expanded physical education environment. This space can be accessed by the Community independently as a meeting or fitness space in itself.

On the 2nd floor, the two learning communities are connected with a linking corridor on both sides of the central Teacher Collaboration spaces in order to readily adapt to changes in student enrollment levels between the various grades and language programs.



Physical Environment

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

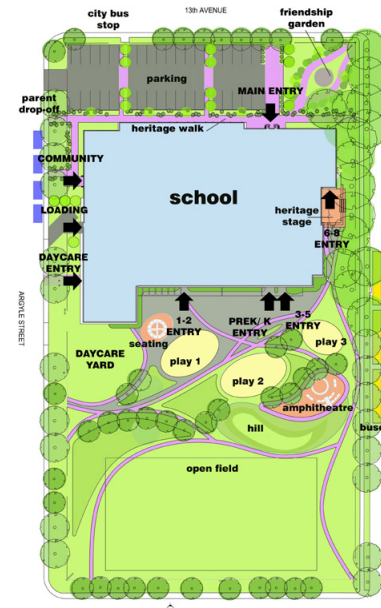
The school's main entry is located next to the relocated Friendship Circle at the corner of 13th Avenue and Elphinstone Street. Community access and parking is located along 13th Avenue as well. Exterior playfields and student entries are located on the sun-filled south and east sides of the school. The building's north side along 13th Avenue has a more traditional appearance using brick and stone in contrast to a more playful south elevation featuring colourful metal panels, windows enclosures, and overhangs. Connected to the main entry are the school's shared community spaces including a large light-filled gymnasium, main reception and various administrative areas.

All students at École Connaught share the central Heritage Hall learning space. This common learning space connects the daily activities of students, teachers and the community. The eastern end of Heritage Hall contains a carpeted learning area with a high glass wall facing Elphinstone Street that is near the location of the main entrance to the original school. Heritage Hall also features a large internal feature stair with integrated amphitheatre seating for individual class instruction or all-school assemblies.

On the west side of Heritage Hall, History Alley displays interesting salvaged features from the original Connaught School and is situated on the footprint where the original school's portico proudly once stood. The upper level holds Cathedral Commons, a shared learning space for two Learning Communities under a large skylight and glazed clerestory wall. The circulation flows into smaller individual learning communities organized by age group (Pre-K - Grade 2; Grade 3 - 5; Grade 6 - 8) on both the first and second levels.

These learning communities feature a variety of flexible learning spaces and shared zones designed to meet the needs of both English and French Immersion track learners.

On the second floor, a south facing roof terrace provides an outdoor learning and congregation space. This terrace provides views to the sun-filled school yard, which contains a vast amount of open space, playing fields and native vegetation. The south façade takes on a more playful character, exhibiting more contemporary expressions, colours and materials including large inset windows that draw natural light into the interior. Students benefit from separate dedicated entrances for each learning community that lead outside to the south side playfields. Existing mature trees help to delineate the outdoor amphitheatre and dedicated play spaces for each age group, which flow into a shared full-sized sports field at the south edge of the site.



SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES

The integrated and collaborative work by all disciplines during the design development phase has allowed a more efficient and integrated design, currently targeting a minimum of LEED NC 2009 Silver certification with a stretch target of LEED Gold.

Sustainability design features for the project include:

- Multiple modes of alternative transportation
- Large open areas of native/ adaptive vegetation
- Minimized exterior light pollution
- Zero landscape irrigation
- Low-flow water fixtures
- High performance building envelope
- Optimal window-to-wall ratio
- High efficiency heating and cooling plants
- Variable frequency drives and pumps
- Radiant heating and cooling
- 100% dedicated outdoor air with high effective heat recovery
- CO2 demand control ventilation in densely occupied spaces
- Low lighting power densities
- Daylighting and occupancy sensors
- Electricity and gas sub-metering

Physical Environment

HOW THE FACILITY FITS INTO THE LARGER COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The design for École Connaught Community School is a direct result of the extensive community consultation process where the building's overall fit in the neighbourhood was identified early as a key design driver that stakeholders were very passionate about. Site relationships, massing and overall design aim to celebrate the rich local culture of the Cathedral Village neighbourhood. Materials salvaged from the original school were-used extensively to communicate the history of the site. These items include original bricks, portico steps, concrete frieze features, concrete rainwater leaders, wood slats from the gymnasium, wood handrails, and an interior building plaque. Various limestone materials were also salvaged including column bases and capitals, medallions, and pilaster bases.

Student displays, art work by local artist Wilf Perrault and feature spaces such as History Ally also speak to the importance of the original school in the community's history.

These historic features and storytelling elements are woven into the fabric of an innovative contemporary 21st century learning environment that reflects the equally forward-thinking ambitions of the Cathedral Village community.

The south elevation incorporates a more playful architectural language, which references the works of treasured Regina artist, Wilf Perrault. Perrault's images of street scenes at dusk with yellow-orange glowing windows animate the scenes and invoke a feeling of warmth in otherwise quiet alleys. Inspired by the glowing windows of the paintings, yellow-orange window fins surround selected windows on the south elevation, wrapping around to the east and west elevations. A muted backdrop of metal siding sets off the colorful reminder of the dynamism of the interior of the school.



Physical Environment

HOW THE PROJECT INSPIRES AND MOTIVATES

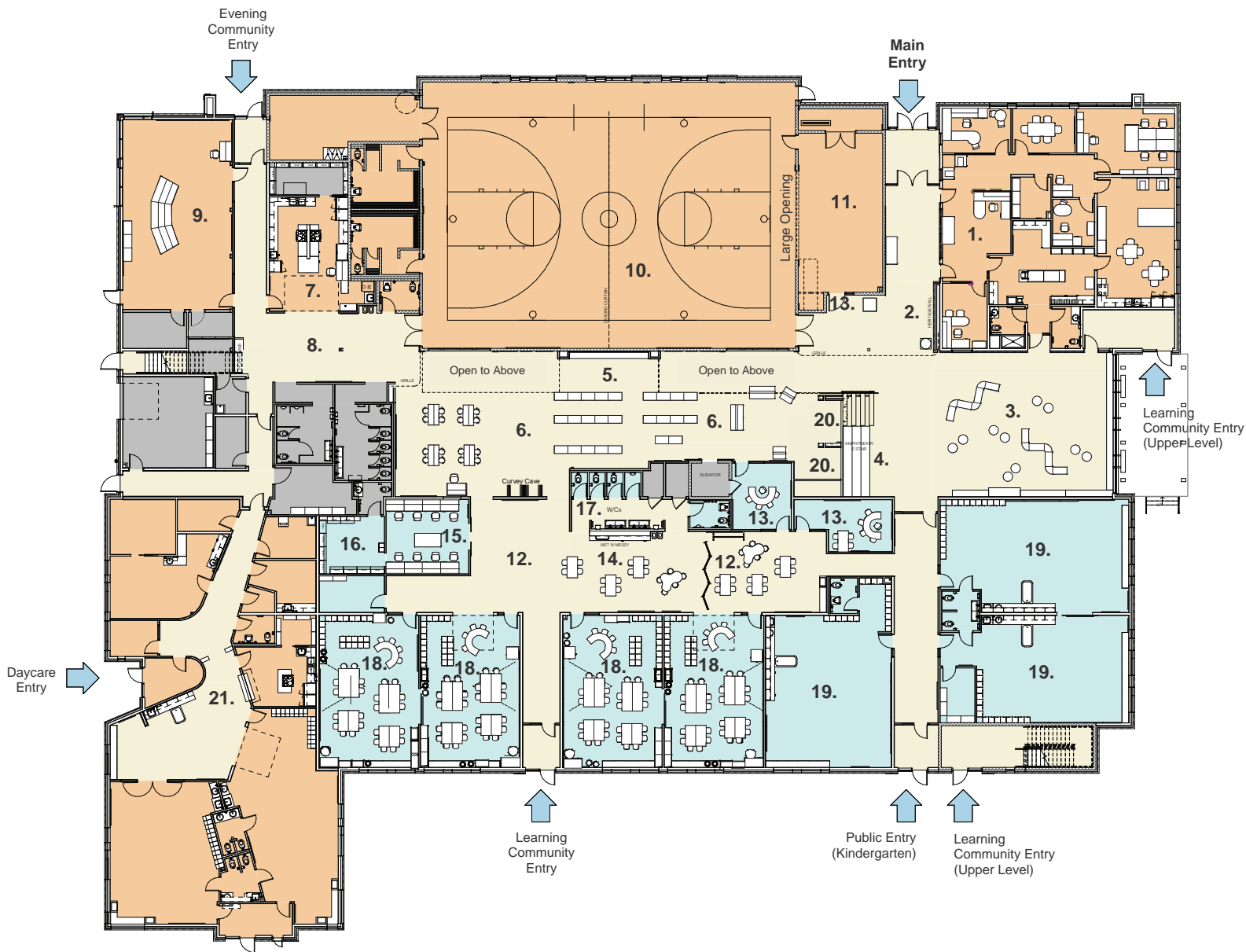
You can tell from one look this is not your typical school. The design strives to create interesting and varied learning spaces to accommodate all teaching styles and student learning modalities. The facility creates flexible spaces for gathering, play, storytelling, independent focused study, quiet work and collaborative project work. Interconnection and glazing between learning environments allows for students and staff to feel connected to each other and promotes a sense of community.

Students and teachers love the variety of small nooks, flexible spaces, project studios and wet/messy areas that encourage more engagement and excitement in the learning process. The building also symbolizes the next chapter in the community's history while honouring its proud past. The school serves as a versatile community hub, with public access to the commons space after school hours. It is also a popular location for PD days and other school administration events. The school also has an integrated early learning centre adjacent to the playfields on the south side.

The design blends classical and reclaimed elements with an abundance of welcoming and stimulating learning spaces that create a sense of both autonomy and community.

The east end of Heritage Hall terminates with full height curtain wall glazing that allows morning light and views to the mature tree canopy and residential neighborhood. Sunlight is controlled by deep vertical mullions and four painted steel frames that reach out from the curtain wall glazing. The steel frames restore the formality and rhythm of the original school's historic entrance portico and provide enclosure for student gathering and entry.

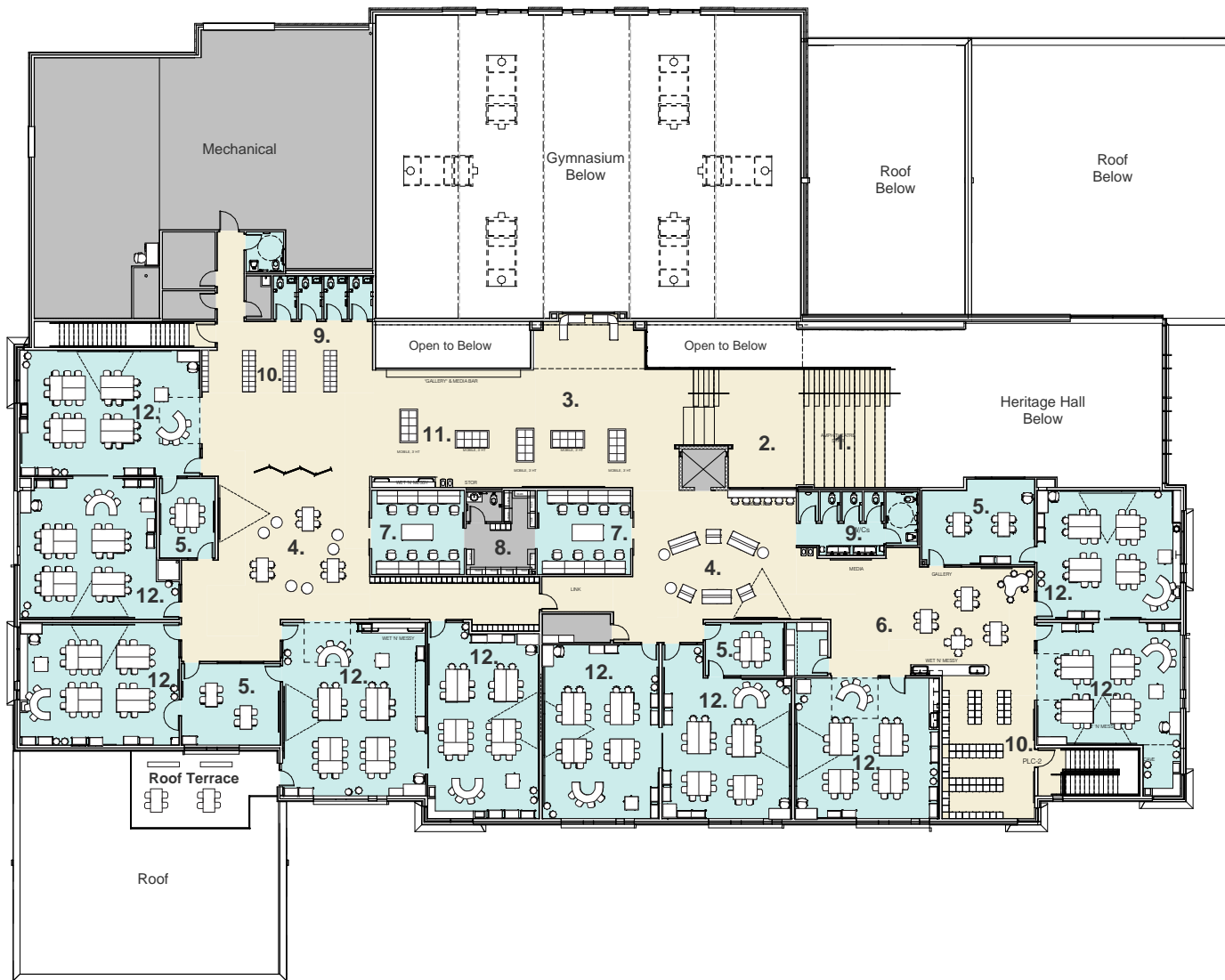




Main Floor

1. Reception/Administration
2. Heritage Alley
3. Heritage Hall
4. Amphitheater Stair (bottom)
5. The Alley
6. Media Centre
7. Kitchen
8. Flexible Eating / Learning
9. Multi-Purpose / Music
10. Gymnasium
11. Fitness / MPR
12. Learning Community Common
13. Small Group / Break-out Room
14. Wet & Messy
15. Teacher Collaboration
16. Teacher Storage & WC
17. Individual Student Washrooms
18. Flexible Classrooms
19. Kindergarten Rooms
20. Cave Spaces
21. Independent Daycare





Second Floor

1. Amphitheater Stair
2. The Learning Lounge
3. Cathedral Commons
4. Learning Community Commons
5. Small Group / Break-out Room
6. Wet & Messy
7. Teacher Collaboration
8. Teacher Storage & WC
9. Individual Student Washrooms
10. Student Lockers
11. Half lockers with Worktops
12. Flexible Classrooms



Results of the Process and Project

HOW THE PROJECT ACHIEVES EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The project achieves the educational goals and objectives of school in the following ways:

1. Flexible Teaching Arrangements and Instructional Grouping

The school is organized into three Learning Communities (LCs), that act as a home base for approximately 100-150 students. Each Learning Community is organized by age group: LC-1: Pre-K to grade 2; LC-2: grades 3 to 5 and LC-3: grades 6 to 8. The school is also designed to accommodate a second use strategy, LC-1 Pre K to grade 3, LC-2 French grades 3 to 8, and LC-3 English grades 3-8. Large glazed overhead doors connect the Learning Studio Spaces, which allow teachers to expand their space if desired. Also, minimal built-in casework allows for flexibility in learning environments to a greater degree with movable furnishings. Other important design concepts include the home-like washrooms, teacher collaboration spaces, wet and messy areas, and media/resource areas dedicated to each Learning Community.

2. Teacher Collaboration

Teachers in each Learning Community have individual professional workstations in a centralized Teacher Collaboration Space. To make these desirable places to work together, they are positioned at the heart of each learning community and are connected to a shared teacher storage area and private staff washroom. The room includes both individual workstations and a central group work/ meeting table.

3. Interdisciplinary and Inquiry-Based Teaching and Learning

The design allows for ample break-out and collaboration spaces for both students and teachers. Each Learning Community has breakout and small group rooms that can be used by students for self-directed work or by specialized support workers and teachers for individual or small group activities and evaluation. Each space provides a stimulating environment for students.

4. Inclusive Practices.

The new school creates interesting and varied learning spaces to accommodate all teaching styles and student learning modalities. The facility includes flexible spaces for gathering, play, storytelling, independent focused study, quiet work and collaborative project work. Interconnection and glazing between learning environments allow for students and staff to feel connected to each while promoting a greater a sense of community.

HOW THE PROJECT ACHIEVES SCHOOL DISTRICT GOALS

École Connaught Mission Statement:

We are a community of leaders who create excellence in life and learning! No excuses!

"The new 21st century learning environment is a shining example of the Public School Board's commitment to creating energy-efficient, environmentally responsible and durable school facilities. The goal was to create a school that provides engaging learning spaces for students while providing an inspiring and safe learning environment. Working closely with the public school board, the design team strived to create a flexible teaching environment that promotes collaboration and interdisciplinary hand-on learning. The words that run through are school reflect a true "Community of Excellence" that promotes leadership in learning and in life."

*Dan Van Buekenhout,
Manager of Capital Planning
Public School Board*

Results of the Process and Project

HOW THE PROJECT ACHIEVES COMMUNITY GOALS

The design for École Connaught Community School achieves all goals identified by the community during the integrated design process consultations. **These included:**

Community Goals

Respect and pay tribute to the memories of the Original Connaught School.

Fit into the Neighbourhood Context.

Accessible for community use after hours.

Design Solutions

Heritage Hall and History Alley tell the Original school's story, showcasing artwork and reclaimed features of the original school.

Reclaimed brick and stone elements, massing, and orientation all work to respect and reflect the historic character of the blend in to the community.

Dedicated public entrance has access to community zone including the School Admin, Gymnasium, Fitness space, MPR Music Room and a Community Kitchen.



Results of the Process and Project

UNINTENDED RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

An unintended result of École Connaught Community School's stakeholder engagement process was how it brought the community together in the face of adversity. At the beginning of the process, many community members were against the very idea of tearing down the original school and wary about how a new school design would impact the community. Through the course of the engagement sessions, these passionate community members would eventually become vocal proponents, coming to love the new school even more than the former school on the site.

Feedback from school administration indicated that they were surprised at how effective the 21st century environment was at improving the education experience of the school's small but important at-risk student population. Their consensus was that the 21st century design is a valuable tool for working with at-risk kids and encouraging them to explore new ways of learning and personal growth. The design also makes it easy for teachers to keep an eye on students from all corners of the building to ensure their safety.

Another considerable achievement was the successful integration of a dual-track (English/French Immersion) program within an innovative 21st century learning environment. The design team was able to achieve effective separation between the two tracks while also accommodating for shared use through flexible and carefully planned design approaches. The high degree of flexibility, transparency, variety and connectivity of the spaces is a model example of effective 21st century learning design.

"They really listened to all of our concerns and all of the challenges and the things about our community that makes it special, and they really did a great job."

Sarah Truszkowski

Cathedral Village Resident and Member of the School Based Design Committee





At ÉCCS, we are a community of leaders,
who create excellence in life and learning!
No Excuses.

À ÉCCS nous sommes une communauté
de leaders créant l'excellence dans la vie
et l'apprentissage. Pas d'excuses.

The Village