









School Address: 357 Robe River Dr, Valdez, AK 99686

School District: Valdez City Schools Superintendent: Jim Nygaard

Capacity: 160 students Grades: 6-8

Occupancy Date: August 2014 Project Cost: \$32.2 M Project Area: 56,759 SF

HOME OF THE

GEORGE H. GILSON MIDDLE SCHOOL



### George H. Gilson Middle School Success is the only option

### A Community Effort

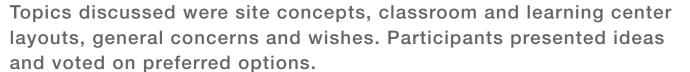
Five planning labs, facilitated by Bettisworth North and DeJong Richter were held with Valdez community members, school administration, staff, teachers, students, and parents to create a comprehensive education specification outlining the requirements of this replacement school.

### **PROJECT GOALS**

• Develop a clear identity for Valdez middle school education.



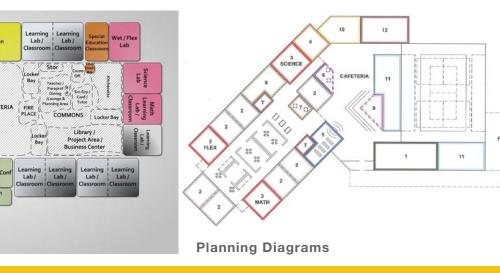




Committee members were active throughout the planning, design, and construction and color committees, ensuring the early goals were met.

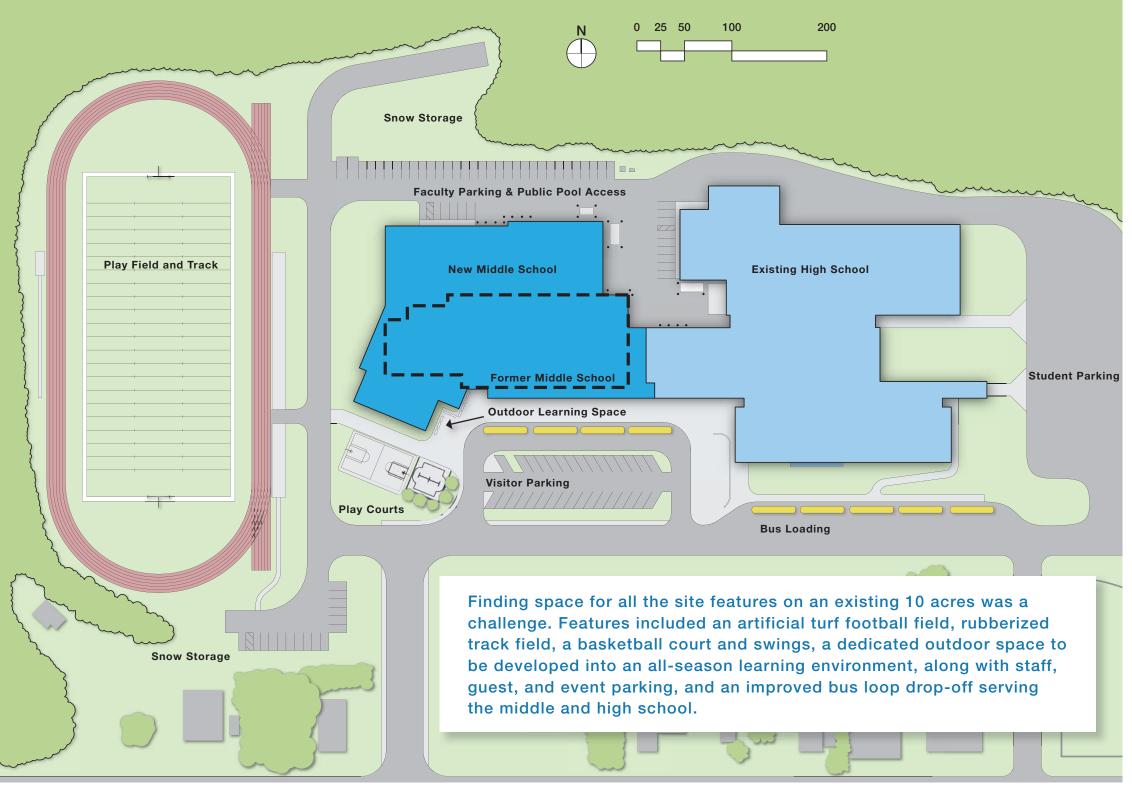
#### Keeping the Community Connected

Throughout the design and construction process, community members could keep up to date with the project progress via the City of Valdez website. This site provided current news, updated drawings, renderings and photos, and meeting notes allowing the community to engage in the design process of their new school.



- Create a safe and inviting environment for students to grow and learn.
- Provide a school that accommodates future student populations.
- Create flexible spaces for different learning styles.
- Provide a building with durable materials for longevity.
- Utilize sustainable design solutions and develop an energy efficient school.
- Design the building to fit into the neighboring surroundings and community.
- Develop spaces for community use in addition to student use.

# **Planning for the Future**



### **A Gathering Place**

The City of Valdez is a tight-knit community of 4,300 people and encompasses a mere 222 square miles of land. The supportive community of Valdez was actively involved in the planning process. It was clear that the middle and high school facilities and fields served an additional purpose besides educating the local youth. These facilities are regularly used outside of school hours by the community as a recreational resource and event location by visiting teams and clubs. The building design paid special attention to these to allow for multiple users, special public events, secure and separate access and entrances.





Located where the ocean meets the mountains, Valdez receives an annual average snowfall of 25.5 feet per year. The design team developed clean and functional exterior spaces responding to the large snow clearing equipment and snow storage needs. The result creates a minimalist landscape around the school, limited in vegetation which can be problematic with high snow loads and winds, but a wonderful, functional and maintainable site that answered Valdez's unique climate.





## Flexible Community Space

### BETTISWORTHNORTH

ARCHITECTURE PLANNING

LANDSCAPE INTERIORS

### **Design & Construction Team**

Architect: Bettisworth North Architects and Planners, Inc. Charles Bettisworth, AIA Tracy Vanairsdale, AIA, LEED AP BD+C Mark Kimerer, ASLA, PLA, CPSI Trent Schoenemann, AIA Jon Denton, AIA Abigale Kron, ASID Bill Hao

**Educational Planners: DeJong Richter** 

Tracy Richter and Bill DeJong

Project Manager: ARCADIS
Contractor: Dawson Construction
Civil: CRW Engineering Group
Structural: BBFM Engineers
Mechanical & Electrical: RSA Engineering
Geotechnical: Shannon & Wilson
Environmental: NORTECH
Cost Estimating: HMS, Inc.
Photographer: Kevin G. Smith Photography

#### **Construction Success**

By issuing a separate, earlier design package for structural engineering, the construction schedule was accelerated by four months which spared staff, students, and administration the stress of moving into the new school over the holiday break. Instead, they were able to start the school year in their new school, completing construction within the length of one school year.





### A New School, A New Identity

Six original artwork pieces were commissioned and integrated into the school design. Bringing life and energy, these pieces add to the important goal of creating a clear identity to the middle school.

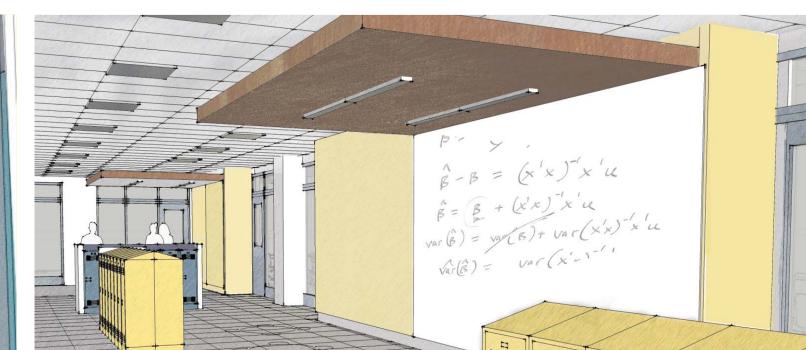
One piece in particular, "Salmon Go to School, Too", was crafted by interested Valdez students and staff with the artist's guidance. This art is a source of pride for the local students involved in its creation.



The Gilson Middle School logo was refreshed by student participation in collaboration with Bettisworth North. The new logo adds to the middle school's unique identity and serves as a source of school pride.







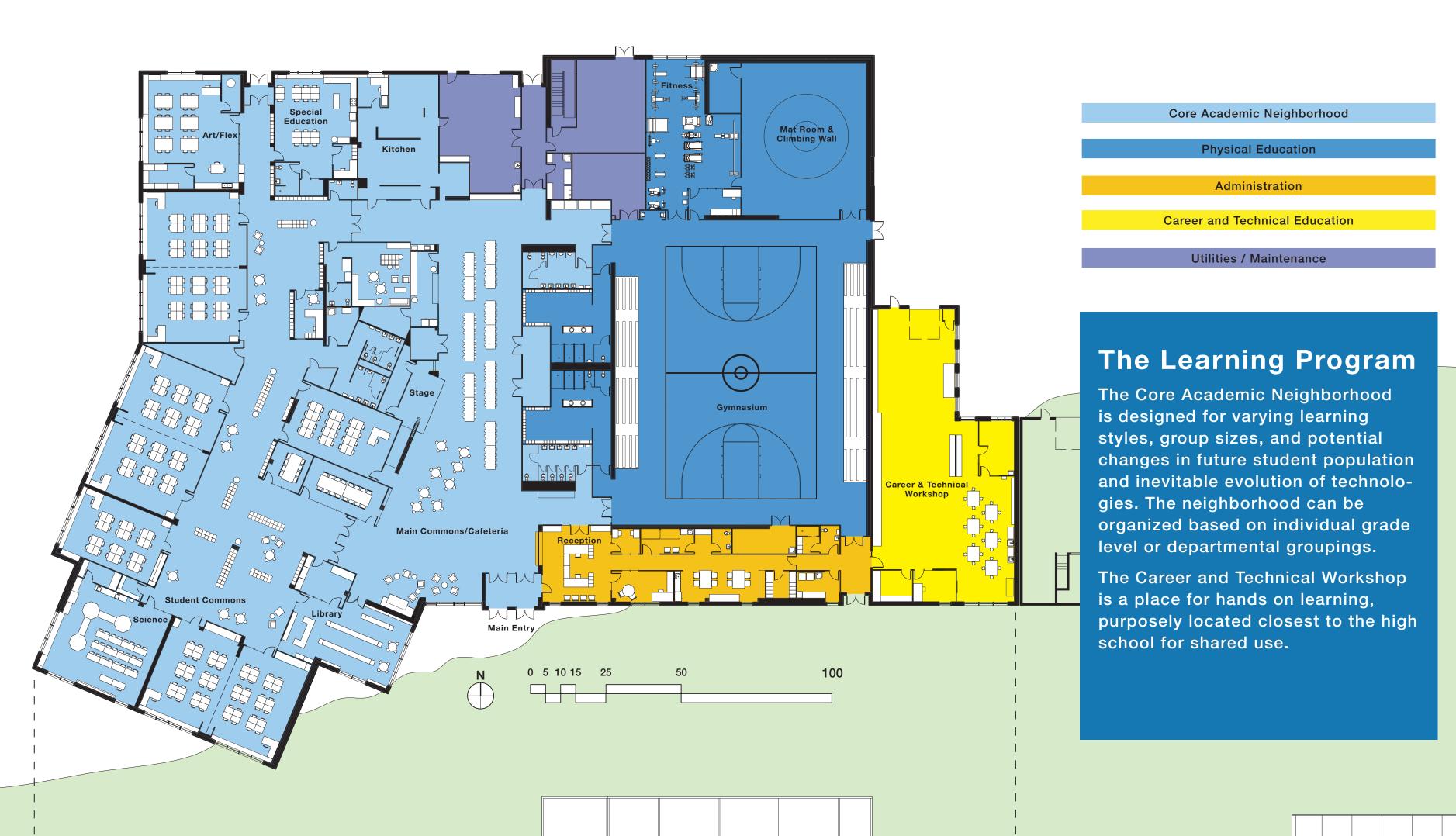
The Main Commons fluctuates between student dining, a presentation space, and a gathering hall. Informal seating clustered by the fireplace and flexible furniture throughout encourages students to socialize and collaborate in a comfortable and inviting environment. Daylight streams into the learning spaces throughout the school day providing a healthy, energizing environment.



The Student Commons serves as an informal learning space. Seating areas clustered against white-board lined and magnetic painted walls allow students to work outside of the classroom structure, yet be in close proximity to teachers and classroom resources.



# **Active Learning Environment**





New Middle School | Existing High School



## **Clear and Unique Identity**