

KODIAK HIGH SCHOOL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LOCATION
OWNER

Kodiak, Alaska
Kodiak Island Borough School District

The island of Kodiak, Alaska includes 3,500 square miles of remote, subarctic land. It is home to the industries of commercial fishing, government and military. **Kodiak High School is the only high school on the island.** Originally established to support local industry, it has struggled for decades to provide core learning in tandem with career and vocational education.

Guiding Principles

Early on, this diverse, rural community set out to identify where it was falling short. After revisiting and revising the facilities needs assessments and educational specifications, the District began conversations with the community to envision the future of Kodiak High School. The planning process culminated with the passage of a bond in 2009.

Themes that were incorporated throughout included:

- Community
- Relationships
- Transparency
- Learning
- Flexibility



Scope of Work

- 5 years of planning
- \$60 million construction budget
- 85,000 square feet new construction
- 104,00 square feet renovation
- 900 student capacity
- External reach to rural school locations



 **DLR Group**
Architecture Engineering Planning Interiors

**Jensen
Yorba
Lott
Inc.** 

KODIAK HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Available Assets

From the beginning, the diverse, yet interconnected nature of Kodiak played largely into the ways this project's potential was shared with the community. Opponents and supporters alike were engaged to incorporate all voices. From parents to government officials, interested business owners, tribal representatives, School District staff members, and industry professionals, the hopeful success of Kodiak High School meant early community involvement invested in the outcome.

When funding from a 2008 bond did not pass, a joint task force between Kodiak Island Borough and Kodiak Island Borough School District was formed by the Mayor to address next steps. This collaborative investigation by both the Borough and District led to the answers needed to overcome the failed bond. By reducing the project scope (dropping an administrative office space which had been an earlier component) and communicating the changes to the community, the project was able to receive the funding it needed through the 2009 bond.

As the project moved into subsequent stages of design, community involvement remained a crucial factor.

Relevant Stakeholders

Kodiak Island Borough School District provides education to nearly 2,500 students. The district operates four large elementary schools, a middle school, a high school, and eight rural schools (K-12), in addition to participating in State-wide distance learning through the program AKTEACH.

Representative of the District, various members of administration, operations, and the high school itself were involved throughout the planning and design process. The Kodiak Island Borough was also a major stakeholder in the process due to their tie to funding and oversight.

KODIAK HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING PROCESS

In Kodiak, the unique blend of industry and culture includes commercial fishing, healthcare, aerospace, the US Navy and the US Coast Guard. **In order to ensure that school staff, students, and the surrounding community would be in support of the final building, the design team conducted 43 meetings over four months during schematic design.** Participants included the Kodiak Island School District Borough, Kodiak Island Borough, Oversight Team, Kodiak High School PTSA, students and staff, the community at large, and the Citizens Advisory Committee.



43 Meetings // 200+ Voices

- Core academics
- Custodial and building services
- Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA)
- Technical and career education
- Students
- PE, athletics, and extra curricular
- Welcome center and administration
- Special needs
- Music and performing arts
- Visual arts
- Media center and student production center
- Cafeteria and food service
- Rural schools
- Central services and business office
- Community members

In one meeting, a student named Samantha said,

“If we see new things, we are more apt to create new things.”

The design committee took this charge to heart. The existing school facility was a confusing maze of additions and renovations, forcing isolation for many student groups. As a result, there was a loss of cohesiveness and empathy. The District, user groups, and students made it clear they wanted the new building to reinvigorate the sense of community absent from the existing building. Even though the future space was unknown to these students and educators, champions for change arose throughout the planning and design process, including many who would never have the opportunity to use the new facility themselves. The support and participation marked the coming of educational and community transformation.

As the design progressed, focus groups were revisited with updated plans, and questions and concerns discussed openly. The majority of the time with each staff group was spent reviewing how space was utilized and talking about plans. Aspects that were working well, as well as challenges were communicated, and sketches and revisions to preliminary plans were done in-person with each group to ensure feedback was understood.

KODIAK HIGH SCHOOL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Vision & Goals

The motto of Kodiak Island Borough School District is “Engaged in Learning. Prepared for Life.” In a sense, the goal of this project was to return to the historic roots of the school and its place in the community through integration of CTE/Vocational components and their visible tie to the surrounding industry.

As the design team met with staff, students, and community members during the early stages of the design, the intent was to foster dialogue, conversation, and idea generation, ensuring each voice was heard.

Building upon the District’s Guiding Principles and Mission, the findings focused on five key points:

- **Community**
- **Relationships**
- **Transparency**
- **Learning**
- **Flexibility**

Support of Curriculum

Prior to the renovation of Kodiak High School, the school faced unaddressed deficiencies dating to 1982. Music, physical therapy, speech language, counseling, reading, and ELL programs did not have space designed to meet program needs. Science, arts, and vocational classes were being taught in regular core classrooms, too small to meet instructional needs. As stated directly by the district,

“Facility limitations are defining instructional programs rather than programs defining facilities.”

Following the renovation/addition of Kodiak High School, the school is experiencing the benefits of forward-thinking curriculum and providing interconnected education within the school and through virtual connections to distant locations.

A major driver of how the building’s program is distributed is tied to the dispersed delivery of CTE programs. By pulling the programs from the recesses of the building and giving them a visible, prominent position in the school, participation in the CTE curriculum has gone up to 70%, and is expanding in influence to other facets of the school. Core curriculum is provided in the 4-story addition, and large group spaces for teaching, learning, and congregating spill into the surrounding areas, encouraging blended learning, group activities, and cross-collaboration.

KODIAK HIGH SCHOOL PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Physical Attributes

Located in the Gulf of Alaska, the island of Kodiak covers just over 3,500 miles. Known for harsh weather, its buildings and infrastructure must withstand 70+ inches of rain in the summer, and 70+ inches of snow in the winter. The School District operates out of the city of Kodiak, serving the educational needs of the entire Borough through facilities in the city and rural facilities in outlying towns.

The construction of Kodiak High School was broken into 10 phases, and special exterior cladding was chosen based on exposure to corrosive salt spray and annual precipitation. The building features materials designed to withstand the harsh weather, while reflecting the natural surroundings in its palette of colors and textures.



Community Context

Situated prominently on a hillside above the waterfront, Kodiak High School overlooks the community from its front door. The concept of the high school as a community asset is especially critical in rural Alaska—with limited community venues. Kodiak High School is designed to support all aspects of community use: education, sports, arts, continuing education and community school activities, as well as independent groups and rentals.

It is even designed to serve as the primary community emergency shelter in the event of a tragic repeat of the tsunamis and earthquakes that hit Alaska in the 1960s.

In effort to convey the rich heritage of the Kodiak Community and the State of Alaska, Kodiak High School had the opportunity to allocate 1% of the budget to public art projects focused on the themes of fishing, industry, and nature designed by Native Alaskans (see below).



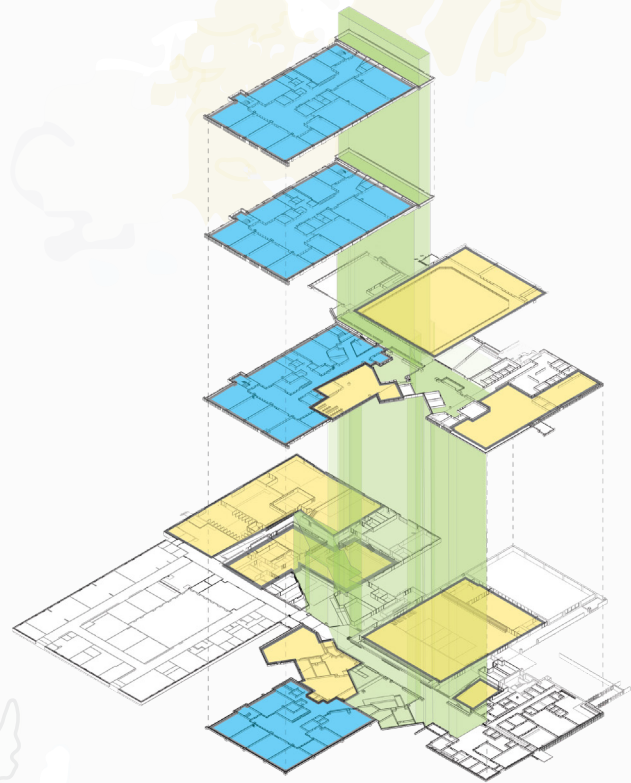
KODIAK HIGH SCHOOL INNOVATION

The four-story tower addition brings learning from the depths of the school and utilizes a large amount of glazing to maximize daylight throughout the school. A common theme of vertical connections can be seen throughout the school – from the showcase “Cascading Commons” to the second floor access of the new gymnasium and library.

The Cascading Commons is a centerpiece of the school, designed specifically to allow for a variety of uses. Located in close proximity to the academic tower, gym, dining, and CTE programs, it transforms from an informal social gathering, to presentation / exhibition space, event pre-function space, to an active project learning space.

Throughout the school, an intentional “link” weaves together previously disconnected programs through a network of overlapping horizontal and vertical paths and volumes. Furthermore, abundant transparency offers glimpses into the activities happening with the classroom, Cascading Commons, or career and vocational spaces. This not only serves to celebrate the work being done in the school, but is also a way for students to spark an interest in programs and areas of study.

Once stigmatized by separation, participation in the CTE curriculum now includes over 70% of the student body.



LEARN ----- LINK ----- EXPLORE

From top to bottom and corner to corner, intentional interconnectivity at Kodiak High School allows core curriculum, career/vocational learning, and community use spaces to merge with fluidity.

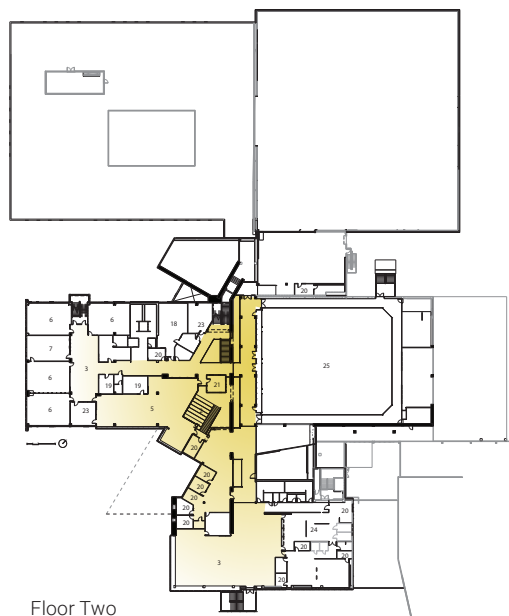
As a result, **vertical and horizontal integration break down the physical and cultural barriers** which were present in the former school.



Floor One



0' 40' 120' 280'



Floor Two



Floors Three & Four

- 1 WELCOME CENTER
- 2 CASCADING COMMONS
- 3 COMMONS
- 4 BEAR'S DEN
- 5 LIBRARY
- 6 CLASSROOM
- 7 CLASS / STUDIO
- 8 MULTI PURPOSE WORKSHOP
- 9 MUSIC INSTRUMENTAL / VOCAL
- 10 DANCE STUDIO
- 11 NATURAL RESOURCES
- 12 CONSTRUCTION LAB
- 13 DESIGN AND ENGINEERING
- 14 AUTO SHOP / MECHANICAL
- 15 METAL FABRICATION / WELDING
- 16 MEDIA ARTS / VISUAL ARTS
- 17 SCIENCE LAB / CHEMISTRY
- 18 ELAP
- 19 WORKROOM
- 20 OFFICE
- 21 GROUP
- 22 STAFF LOUNGE
- 23 RESOURCE
- 24 KITCHEN
- 25 GYMNASIUM
- 26 FITNESS
- 27 HEALTH