

# Amistad Elementary School

Kennewick School District  
Kennewick, Washington



General Contractor: Chervenell Construction  
Bouten Construction  
Coffman Engineers

Electrical Engineer: MSI Engineers  
Mechanical Engineer: DCI Engineers  
Structural Engineer: JUB Engineers  
Civil Engineer: SPVV Landscape Architecture  
Landscape: SPVV Landscape Architecture

## The Community

- Students attending Amistad have one of the highest free and reduced lunch-eligible populations in the area.
- A high percentage of students are immigrants and speak English as a second language.
- Many students reside in temporary housing and often only attend Amistad for a short time during their early learning years.

## Engagement

- Stakeholders include the established neighborhoods, District staff, a daycare facility located on the site, and Amistad staff, students, and families.
- Improving safety was a key concern. Many students had to cross a busy arterial on their way to school. The solution was to reorganize parking and vehicular access and construct a pedestrian promenade extending to the south, creating a safe pathway.



## Educational Vision & Goals

Rather than remodeling and expanding the existing Amistad (which translates to “friendship” in Spanish) as the District had done on other prototypes, they elected to replace the building with a new school.

- **Goal:** Accommodate 30% more students and staff while providing an educational environment that is nurturing, welcoming, and personal.
- **Goal:** Provide a welcoming environment for all that expresses how important each student is as an individual and as part of the greater community.
- **Goal:** Have the school embrace the neighborhood while welcoming students and parents onto the site in a safe, intuitive manner.

A challenge was that the school needed to be built in two phases due to budget and space constraints. It was designed so students could occupy the previous school while the Phase 1 school was being built, and then move into Phase 1 while Phase 2 was being built.



## Educational Results & Achievements:

- To support varied curriculum and learning styles, teaching opportunities are provided outside the classroom in a variety of forms.
- The outdoor teaching and gathering space, learning stair, library, and central gathering area provide a living room for the Amistad community.
- Informal learning areas offer additional opportunities for individual and small group instruction.
- The learning stairs provide a large indoor area to combine classes, and also serve as overflow space for groups of students to take a break or work independently.
- These flexible spaces became unexpectedly helpful when the need arose to divide classes and lunch time into smaller groups due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Flexible, Adaptable Learning Environments

- Flexible spaces were created to accommodate smaller learning groups.
- Outdoor learning spaces provide flexibility and variety while taking advantage of the 192 sunny days Kennewick has to offer.
- Classrooms offer ample natural light and views of the surrounding neighborhood. Soft seating areas are provided to accommodate screen time, including cozy window nooks for students to relax.
- Classroom wings include view corridors where small group instruction takes place, allowing daylight to flow into the corridors.



## Inspiration & Motivation

The staff choose four inspirational words - Friendship, Respect, Courage, Integrity - to represent the Amistad culture. These inspirational words were translated into the 25 languages spoken within the school and used to create accent walls that illustrate the importance of every student at Amistad.

## Sustainability

Of utmost priority in the design is daylight; proven to provide measurable benefit to student learning, health, and well-being. The classroom fenestration design funnels daylight deep into the classrooms and provides the opportunity for students to engage with the outdoors via the seating nooks.

