

The Ensworth School Red Gables Campus, Nashville TN

Owner: **The Ensworth School**

Head of School: **Prentice Stabler**

Owner's representative:
David E. Johnson AIA

Design firm:
**Johnson Johnson Crabtree
Architects (JJCA)**
**David E. Johnson AIA, Principal-
in-charge and Linda Mark AIA,
Project Manager**

Landscape architect:
Heibert + Ball, Land Design

Engineers/Consultants:
**Envision Advantage (MEPT),
EMC Structural Engineers,
Ingram Civil Engineering Group,
WPI Studio (Interior Design)**

Builder: **D.F. Chase, Inc.**

Photographer:
Nick McGinn Photography



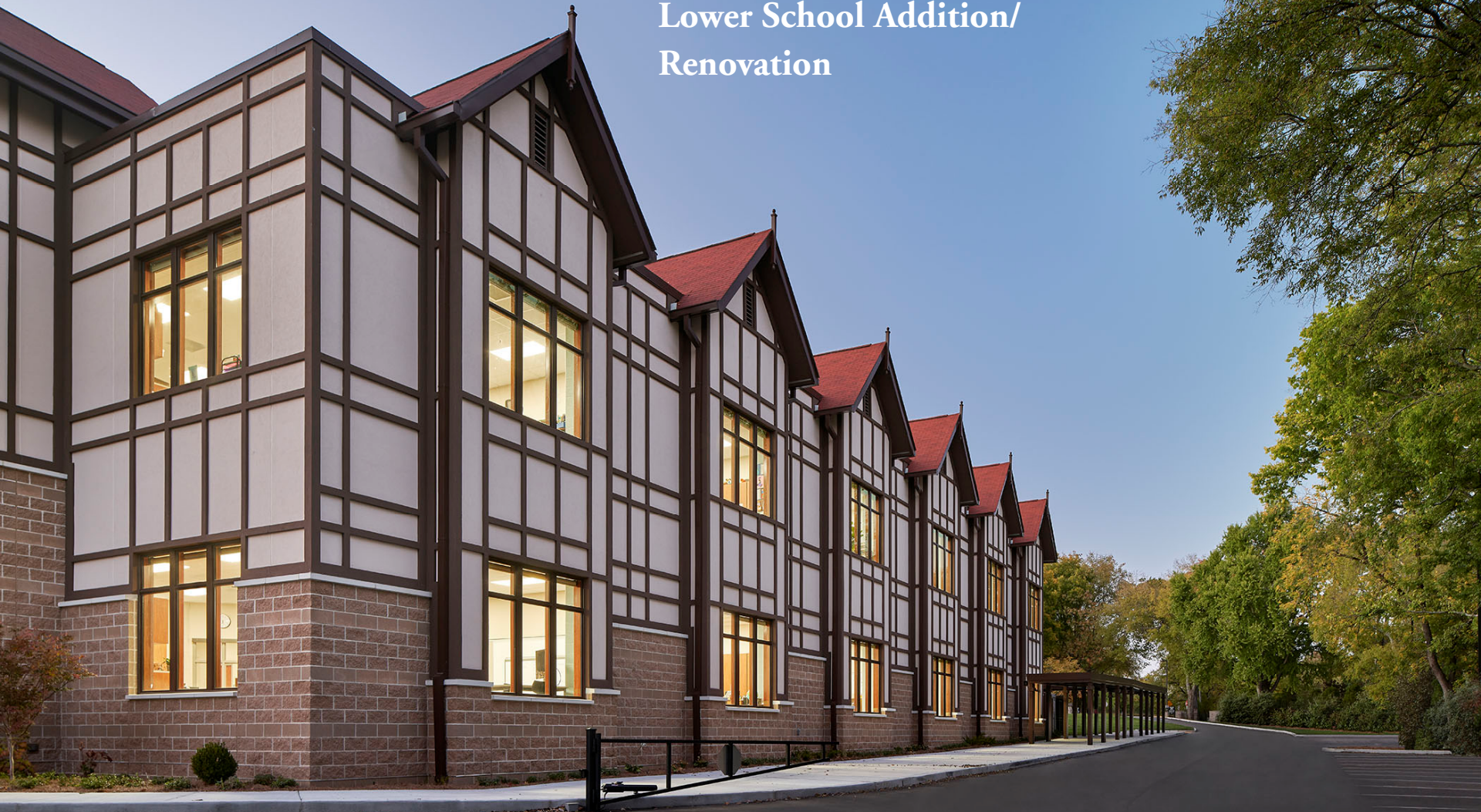
2022 TENNESSEE CHAPTER *DESIGN AWARDS*

ARCHITECTURAL EXHIBITION & AWARDS

FEBRUARY 03, 2023

The Ensworth School

Lower School Addition/
Renovation

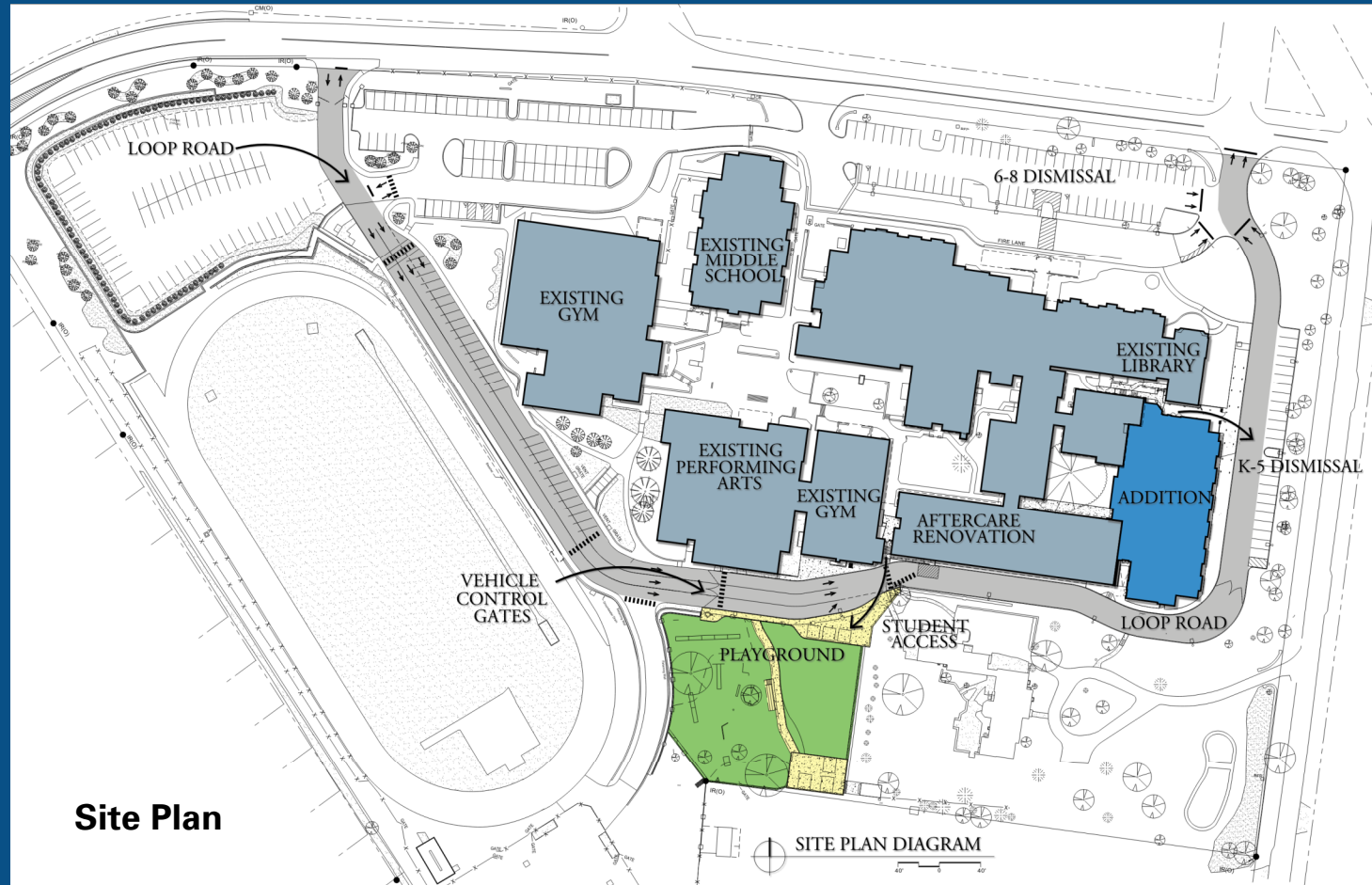


Community Environment

The Ensworth Lower School Addition/Renovation project had a significant impact on the safety of students, staff, and visitors, and transformed the playground into a year-round play and learning space.

Prior to this project, parents and caregivers were limited on the amount of space available for picking up students from school. In addition to a new building, the project included scope to complete the campus loop road. As a result, the campus vehicle and pedestrian flow is smooth and safe with minimal backups and congestion. The loop has a three-lane portion that provides additional special event parking.

While the campus loop road allows for smooth traffic flow, it also cut off the existing playground from the main campus. Vehicle control gates were installed to stop cars and allow students to cross safely from the main campus to the playfields.

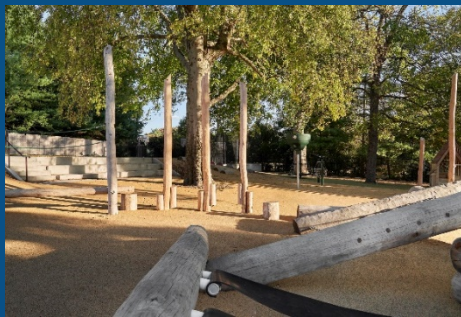


Site Plan

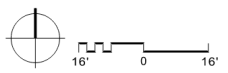
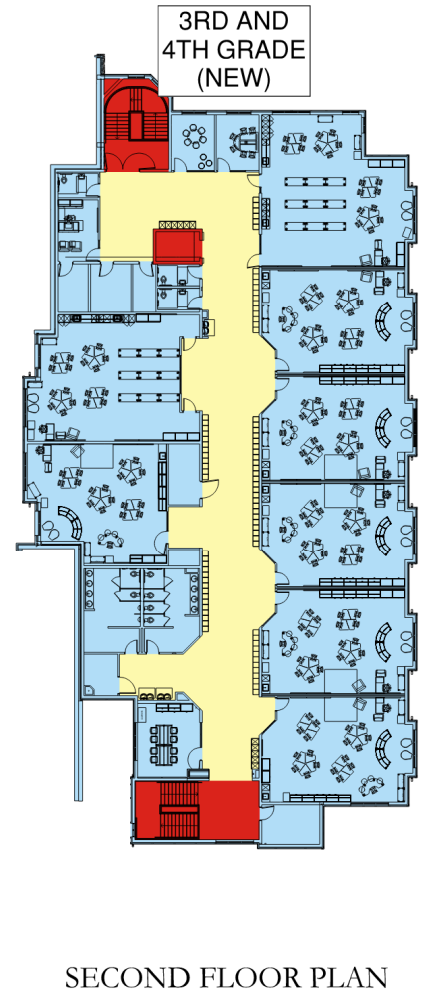
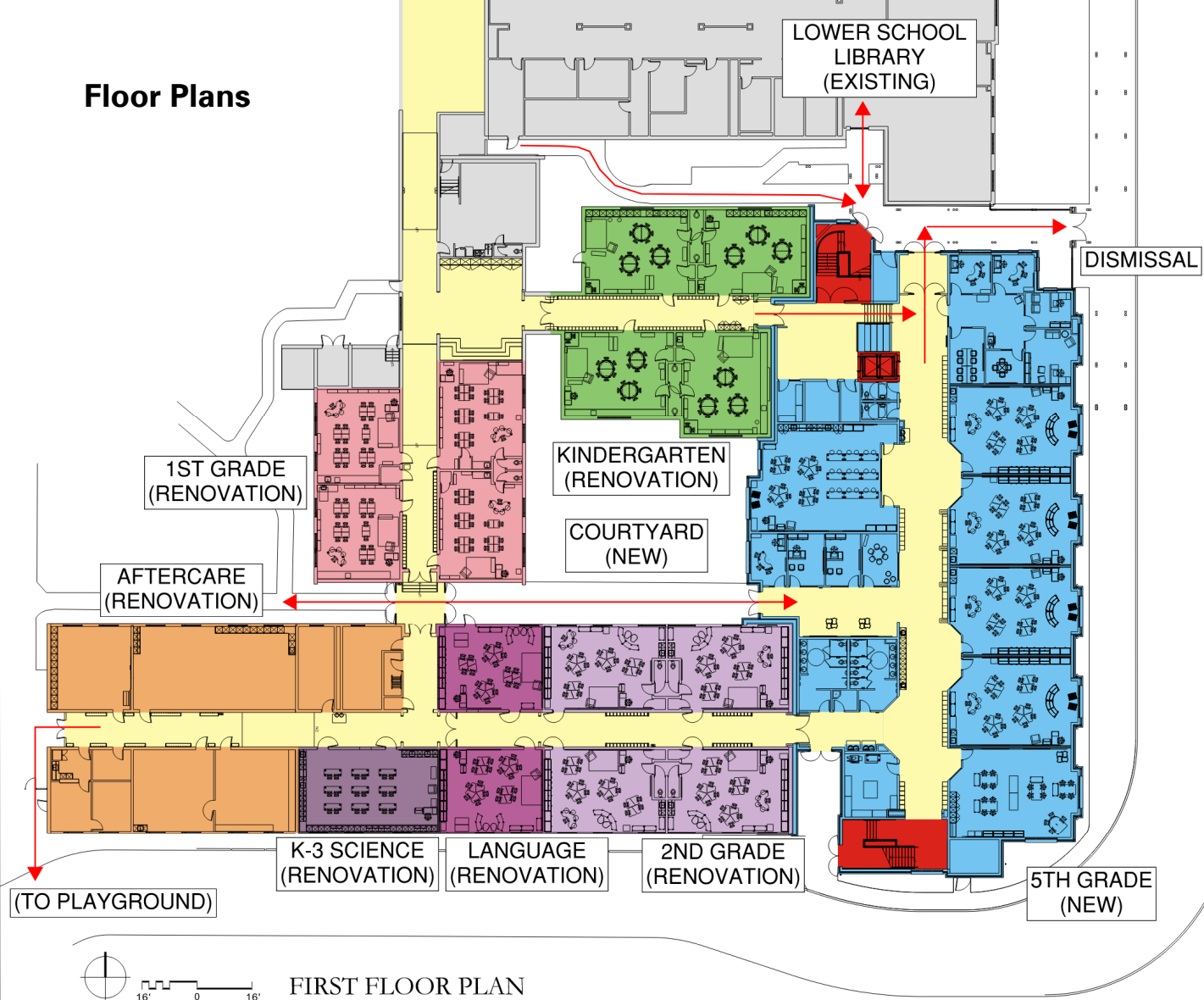
Community Environment

Ensworth School educators wanted to enhance their year-round playground for play and learning. The project included installing a larger artificial turf field and repositioning basketball courts to the rear of the play field. A wide-stepped concrete seating area transitions between the turf field and the playground area, where students can also enjoy built-in hill climbing. Students can enjoy playing four-square or sharing snacks together on the open space on the large concrete apron at the edge of the turf field.

Students explore, run, jump, and crawl on the intentionally selected playground equipment that features wood elements and a natural feel. As a result, even the durable and safe playground equipment helps students connect with nature, develop gross and fine motor skills, use their imagination, and grow their social skills.



Floor Plans

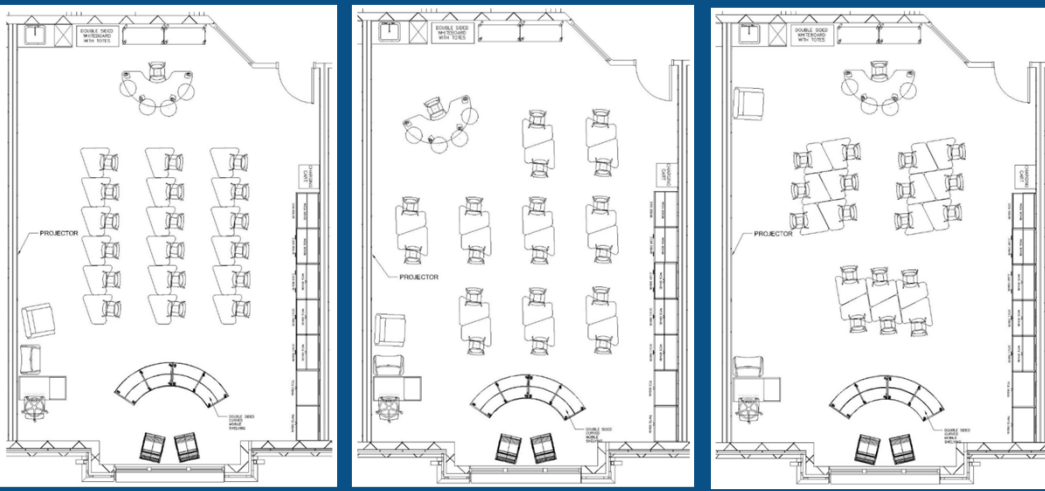


Physical Environment Design

Establishing the classroom building's location was challenging because it connected two existing building wings at different floor elevations. The solution is a well-intentioned cohesive solution.

- Connecting to two buildings with different finished floor elevations provided an opportunity to incorporate a learning stair.
- Maintaining a convenient connection to the lower school library addressed fire codes that required specific egress out of the library; an enclosure connection to the lower school library was not possible.
- Renovating the existing 1960s lower school building provides 21st century learning spaces for second grade, dedicated language classrooms, K-3 science classroom, and aftercare programs.
- Situating aftercare close to the gym and playground allowed after-school programming activities to be consolidated into a contained triangular area for improved student safety.
- Locating the new addition created a courtyard which surrounds a decades old tree that has significance to the Ensworth school community. The courtyard's placement also allows students to bypass the kindergarten and second grade hallways with minimal noise disruptions to those classrooms.
- Designing larger classrooms provide for agile, flexible learning. The new 900 square foot classrooms are approximately 30% larger, and teachers can now have students move their desks into small groups, large groups, rows for test taking, or out of the way for large open floor space activities.

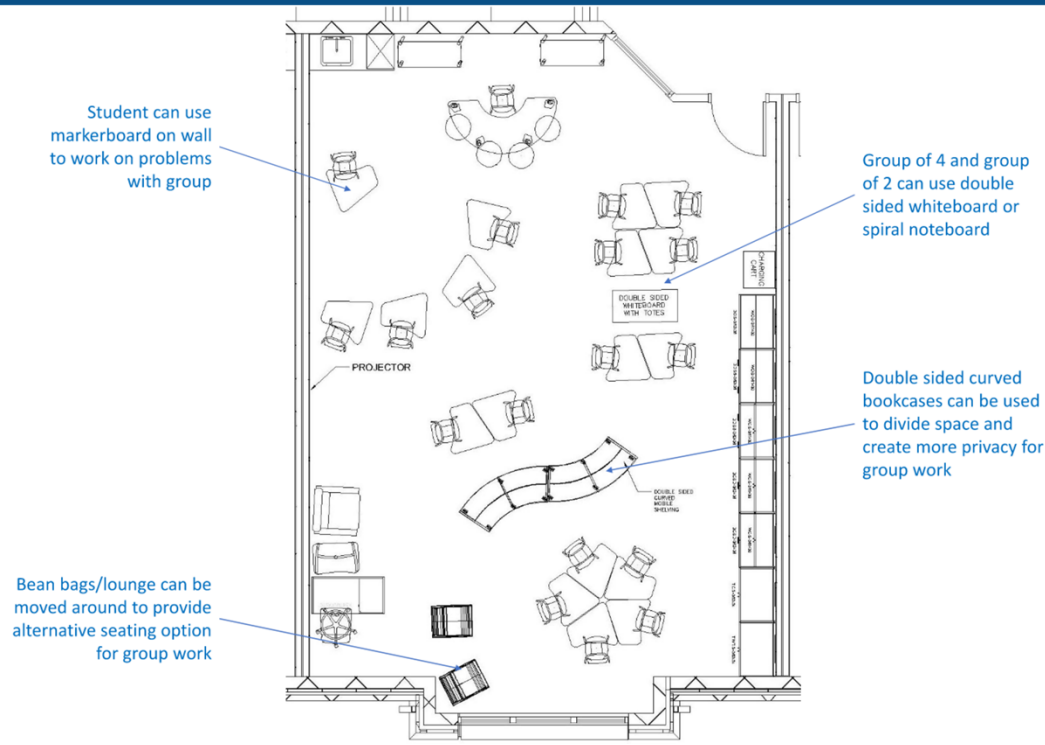




The Planning Process

The best educational designs are a collaborative process, and Ensworth teachers joined the design team to dream big about what their new lower school could become. They reflected on their existing learning environments and imagined what their ideal learning environment would look like to help students learn best. The teachers met with the design team throughout the day, coming and going more than once to provide additional thoughts, leaving comments on large printouts posted on the wall alongside inspirational images and quotes that inspired them to dream big.

The design team took that valuable feedback about how Ensworth students learn, and used its architectural skills and creativity to design modern spaces that are flexible, spacious, and agile.



The Learning Environment

The teachers' dream ideas were compiled and followed up with additional meetings and collaborative discussions about how Ensworth students work together and individually. From those initial planning sessions, the team realized that furniture selections played an important role in how students feel within the space. As a result, the furniture types and flexibility were intentionally considered throughout the process.

Ensworth's learning spaces blend social, emotional, and instructional elements. The furniture selection allows teachers to always have a visual connection to students and includes pieces that accommodate smaller reading nooks within the larger classroom context.

Collaborative, large group, small group, and testing layouts are easily reconfigurable throughout the day to adapt to instructional needs.





The Learning Environment

School security and safety are both of utmost importance, and the solutions to each are very different: security is about how the built environment is controlled and safety is about how a person feels within the space. The Ensworth campus security methodology strives to provide a secure place to learn while maintaining a welcoming feeling to students, faculty, and the community.

Students learn best when they feel comfortable, and the Ensworth addition promotes well-being and health. The learning environment is enhanced with large windows for natural lighting, hallways with windows at the end with views to nature, intentionally considered overhead lighting, colored bulkheads for wayfinding, carpet to reduce noise within the spaces, and fun yet soothing colors throughout.

Design Efficiency and Expansion Capability

The way students learn is constantly evolving. Learning environments designed for today's students also need to be flexible to respond to future learning styles—and, more specifically, be agile to adjust quickly. The walls between the classrooms are non-load bearing and are designed to be easily removed in the future should classrooms need to be reconfigured for flexibility. Rather than being fixed, the casework is all mounted on a wall rail system which allows for teachers to adapt their rooms more frequently to accommodate different teaching styles.

This addition project was designed to fit seamlessly with the existing campus, and the renovated kindergarten, first, and second grade classrooms feel as fresh as the recently constructed third, fourth, and fifth grade classrooms.





Spatial Organization

Designing educational facilities in the 21st century requires a level of adaptability not typical of other building types because teaching methods and learning needs change constantly. This addition/renovation project provides the ultimate in flexibility.

Ensworth's lower school spaces include science labs, math and world language classrooms, dedicated maker spaces, offices, teacher prep rooms, and covered outdoor areas. Each floor has small group collaboration rooms.

Corridors are load bearing while partitions between classrooms are metal stud to allow for future space reconfiguration. Furniture pieces are used for shelving in lieu of built-in casework, IT is not limited to the front of the classroom, and desks can be reconfigured in small group seating or rows for testing.

Wide hallways, careful placement of color, and interior design elements that mimic the exterior gables of the campus, add to the playfulness of the space.



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Project Data

Site size for addition and related work:
2 acres

Student capacity: **450 students**

Area of building (SF) for addition/
renovation: **total 50,311 SF**

Total project cost: **withheld by request**

Cost per square feet: **withheld by
request**

Cost per student (\$/student): **withheld by
request**

Space per student (SF/student): **112 SF**

