

Humble ISD, Kingwood Middle School

A4LE Summit Architectural Award Project Dossier



Kingwood Middle School replaces an aging campus with a 204,000-square-foot, three-story facility designed to **redefine the middle school experience**. The project's primary goal was to create a **flexible, student-centered learning environment** rooted in **transparency, collaboration, and connection** to Kingwood's "Livable Forest" identity. Organized around a central collaboration spine and compact learning neighborhoods, the campus supports **interdisciplinary instruction, project-based learning, and social-emotional wellness**.

Constructed in phases to maintain uninterrupted instruction, the new building was delivered on the existing 18-acre site. Once occupied, the original school was demolished and replaced with new athletic facilities. The result is a future-ready campus that advances academic performance, fosters belonging, preserves green space, and serves as a civic anchor for the broader community.



The project included the design and phased construction of a new 204,000-square-foot middle school on the existing campus, followed by demolition of the original facility and construction of new athletic fields and site amenities. The three-story structure consolidated the academic program vertically to preserve open space and avoid land acquisition costs.

The scope encompassed:

- Academic learning neighborhoods with core classrooms, science labs, and flex labs
- Integrated CTE, fine arts, AVID, and Special Education spaces
- A central collaboration spine and learning commons
- A black box theater, dance studio, ensemble rooms, and glass-front Culinary Arts lab
- A central courtyard and covered outdoor learning areas
- Dining commons designed for dual use as performance space
- Building automation systems and high-efficiency mechanical systems
- Site development addressing floodplain constraints

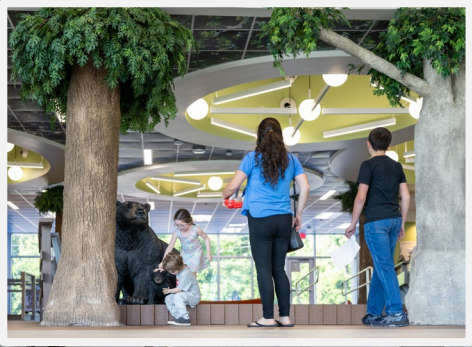
Budget stewardship was achieved through compact site planning, durable materials, high-efficiency systems, and phased construction that maintained operations throughout the project. The vertical building strategy preserved green space and maximized long-term operational efficiency.



Prior to the demolition of the former school, Humble ISD and other agencies such as The Sheriff's Office, Precinct 4 constables, and Humble police implemented a ballistics training program in the empty middle school on a Sunday in 2022.



One week later, students and staff gathered at the former school and took part in "KMS Demo Day," where they spraypainted the walls and began the tear down of the old building.



Over 75% of the students said that they feel welcome, safe proud or inspired when they enter the school.

Describe the Community

Located in the wooded Houston community of Kingwood, the school reflects the area's identity as the "Livable Forest." The community values nature, continuity, civic engagement, and strong feeder patterns that connect elementary, middle, and high schools.



Identify Stakeholders

Stakeholders included students, teachers, campus leadership, district administrators, families, alumni, and local nonprofit organizations. Students played an active role in shaping the vision through exercises such as "Postcard from the Future," Image Extravaganza workshops, and interactive planning sessions.



The new building occupies the northern half of the site where the athletic fields used to be. After the new building was completed, the old building was demolished, and the athletic fields were rebuilt on the southern half of the site.

Key challenges included:

- Maintaining full campus operations during construction
- Building within floodplain constraints
- Replacing an aging facility while honoring its legacy
- Integrating expanded CTE and interdisciplinary programming
- Preserving green space on a limited site.



PLAY THEORY

Discussing a common project vision

Describe Available Assets

The project leveraged strong community identity, committed district leadership, and an engaged student body. The wooded site provided a natural framework for biophilic design. Existing feeder relationships and civic partnerships reinforced the school's role as a neighborhood anchor.

Describe Value of Process and Project

The collaborative planning process built trust and shared ownership. Students and educators directly influenced the spatial organization and character of the school. Today, the building functions as both an educational facility and a community resource, hosting nonprofit meetings, performances, and public events. The project strengthened community pride while delivering long-term educational and operational value.

plays
like

"Using fun technology to learn."
-Kyle

green
like

"More plants and foliage would be great for the environment, as well as a fantastic decoration to the new school."
-Carleson

inspire

"Innovative design to enhance the learning environment"
-Ivy

epic
like

"Moving, versatile, lots of light, enlightening, quick and safe!"
-Laura

celebrate

"Celebrate the creativity and strengths of the children enrolled here, and give them a space where they can build on those strengths."
-Cameron

open
like

"A place you want to go to."
-Katie

flows
like

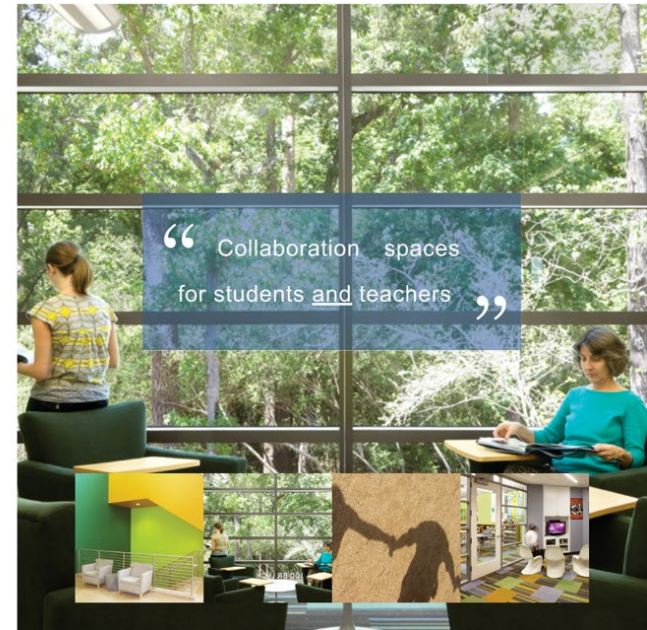
"Different connections, one direction."
-Smithson

dream

"Options for students to have more classes to choose from."
-Reannon

discover

" We need to discover new ways to unite the school environmentally, emotionally, socially and technologically. "



" Collaboration spaces for students and teachers "



Educational Vision and Goals

The school's vision centers on performance, flexibility, and early career exploration. Students are positioned as makers, presenters, and collaborators. A sixth-grade CTE rotation expands access to career pathways and reinforces equity.

How the Environment Supports Curriculum

Learning neighborhoods cluster classrooms, labs, and flex spaces around shared collaboration zones, supporting interdisciplinary instruction. Science labs, CTE maker spaces, fine arts studios, and the Culinary Arts lab are embedded within academic clusters rather than isolated wings. Transparency between spaces promotes visibility and cross-disciplinary engagement.

The dining commons doubles as a performance venue, reinforcing presentation-based learning. Open exhibition areas and glass-fronted labs highlight student work and elevate academic achievement.





Variety of Learning and Teaching Styles

Classrooms are larger than traditional middle school rooms and include operable partitions, flexible furnishings, and integrated technology. Teachers can shift between lecture, seminar, small-group instruction, and project-based collaboration. Hallways function as active breakout zones, offering varied environments for different learning preferences.

Adaptability and Flexibility

Operable walls, adjacent flex labs, and shared collaboration spaces allow programs to evolve over time. Multipurpose environments—such as the black box theater and flexible CTE labs—can adapt to future curricular shifts. The building's infrastructure supports technology integration and long-term programmatic growth.

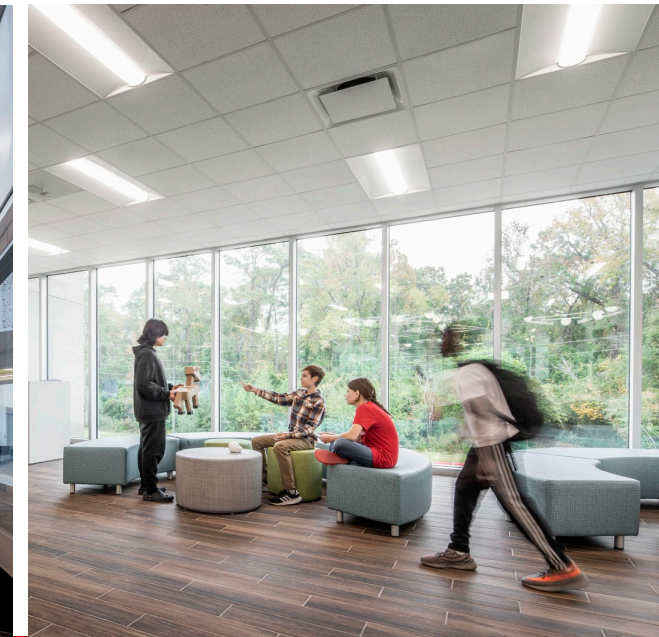




Physical Attributes

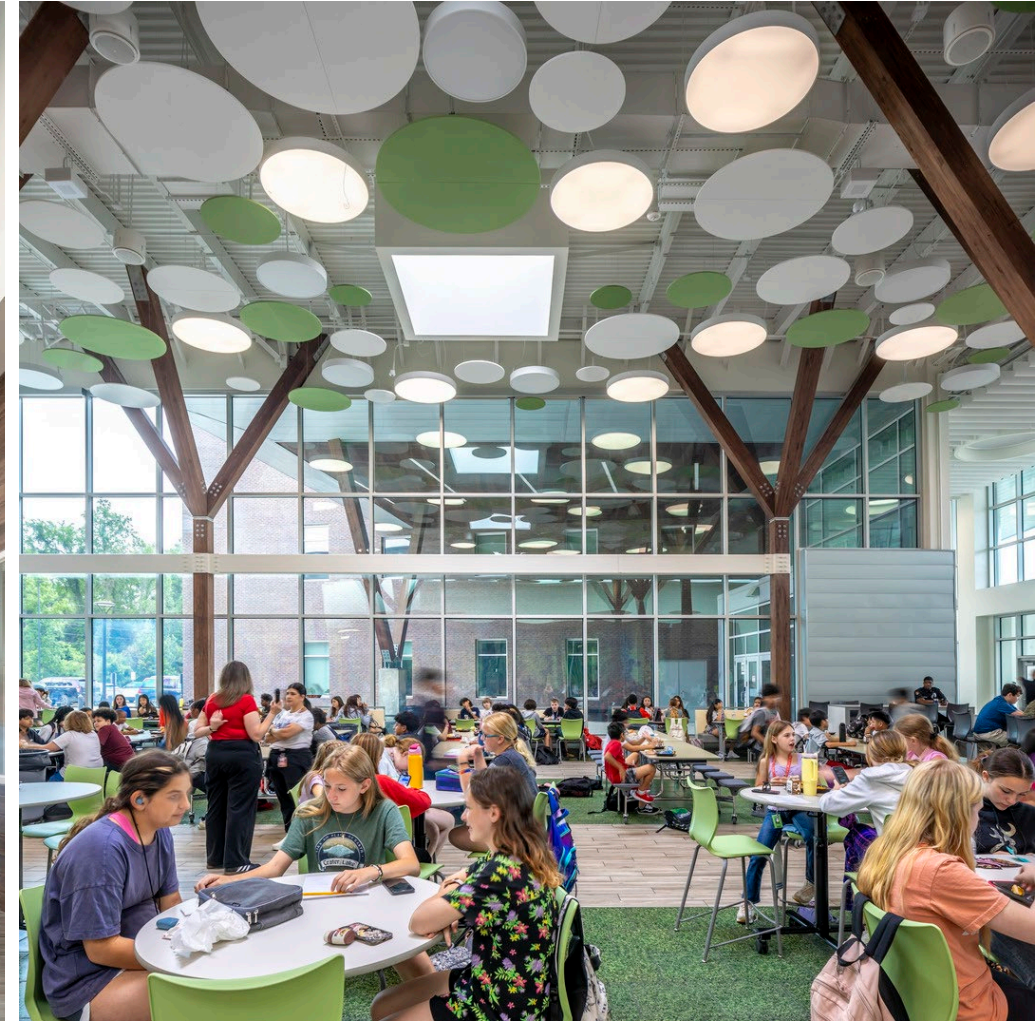
The three-story structure is organized around a central courtyard that anchors the campus socially and spatially. Floor-to-ceiling glazing introduces natural light and views of the surrounding tree canopy. Covered outdoor classrooms and shaded seating extend learning beyond the building envelope.

Interior materials were selected for durability and sensory support. Clear wayfinding, visual transparency, and embedded administration areas enhance safety and supervision. A vertical layout encourages movement, with stairs serving as both connectors and opportunities for physical activity.



Fit Within Community Context

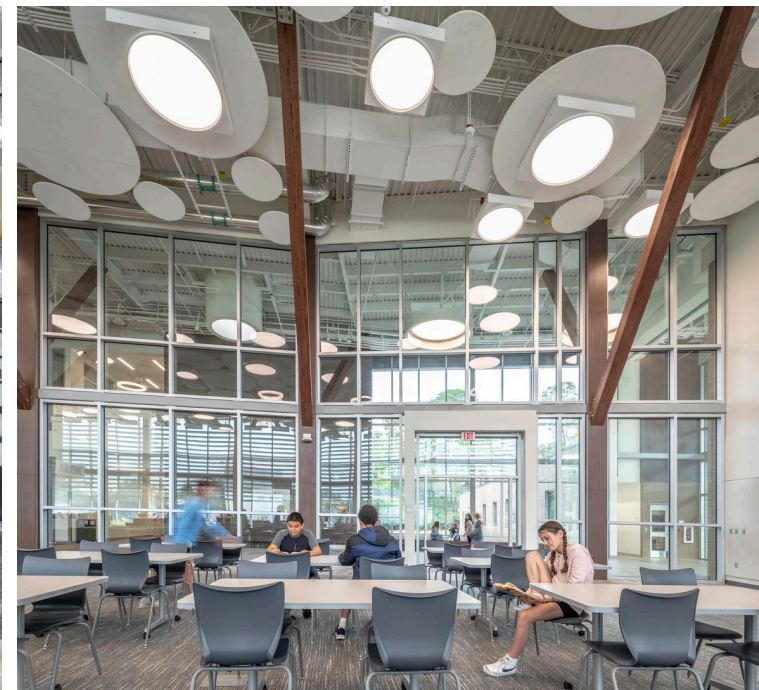
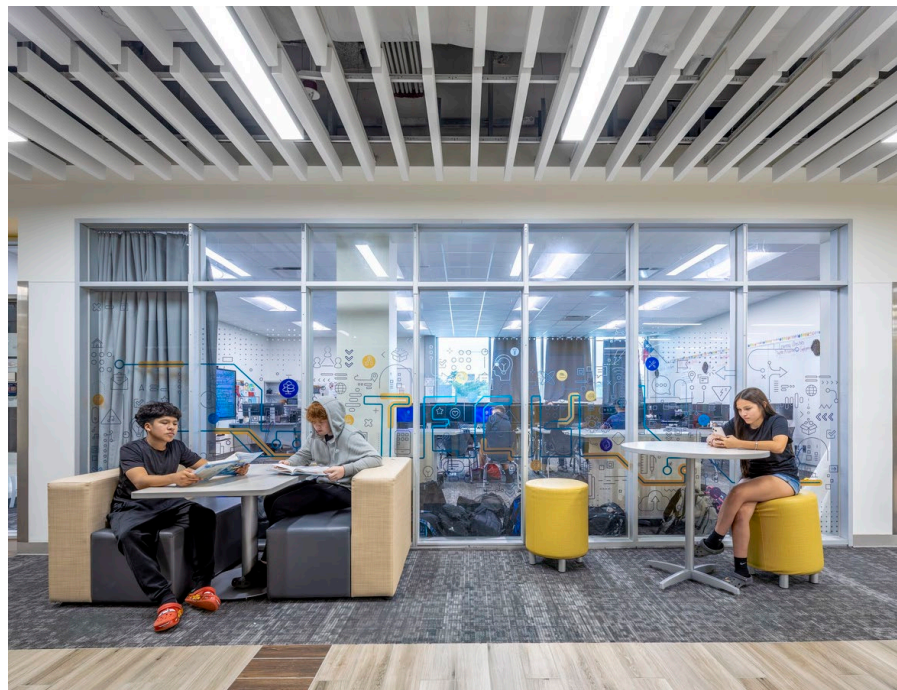
The design draws directly from Kingwood's wooded character, incorporating earth-toned materials and framed views of the forest canopy. The building maintains original school colors and symbolic elements, reinforcing continuity with the former campus. Built entirely within the existing 18-acre site, the project preserved green space and neighborhood ties.





Inspiration and Motivation

The reimagined front entrance establishes a welcoming civic presence. The light-filled Learning Commons replaces the former library with an active, visible hub of student life. Glass-walled specialty labs and open exhibition zones celebrate student work daily, reinforcing pride and motivation.



Achievement of Educational Goals

The campus advances interdisciplinary learning, career exploration, and performance-based instruction. Flexible neighborhoods support evolving pedagogy, while integrated CTE and fine arts programming broaden student engagement.



Results of the Planning Process & Project



Achievement of District and Community Goals

The project met district priorities for operational continuity, safety, sustainability, and long-term cost control. Phased construction avoided disruption. High-efficiency systems and building automation reduce life-cycle costs. The compact vertical design preserved site resources. The school reflects Kingwood's identity and serves as a civic hub. Community groups regularly use the theater and library. Student-led tours and visible artwork foster ownership and pride.



Results of the Planning Process & Project

Unintended Results and Achievements

Students have become ambassadors for the campus, confidently explaining its design and function during tours and public meetings. Hallways originally conceived as circulation spaces have evolved into active collaboration zones. The courtyard has become a daily gathering space that strengthens peer relationships and wellness.

Kingwood Middle School stands as both a replacement facility and a cultural transformation—shifting from a traditional, inward-facing model to an open, connected, and future-ready campus that serves students and the broader community alike.

