



WONDERFUL COLLEGE PREP ACADEMY
DELANO, CALIFORNIA

DESIGN FOR EQUITY

**SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY HAS BEEN
CALLED “THE FOOD BASKET OF THE WORLD”
FOR THE WEALTH OF ITS PRODUCE.**

**IRONICALLY, THE US CENSUS
BUREAU FOUND THAT 6 OF ITS COUNTIES
WERE AMONG THE 52 WITH THE HIGHEST
POVERTY RATE IN THE UNITED STATES.**

**HOW DOES ONE RECONCILE
THIS ABSURD CONTRADICTION?**

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL CAMPUS MIRRORS THE INTEGRATED FABRIC OF A CITY AND ENCOMPASS EVERYTHING FROM ACADEMIC LEARNING TO COURTYARDS, DINING, KITCHEN, FITNESS, PLAY AREAS, WALKING PATHS, AND MEADOWS AND GROVES.





DESIGN FOR EQUITY

How do you provide opportunities for vast segment of Central Valley population that has been left behind? What are the tools necessary to re-imagine and re-build their future and community?

TOOLS FOR WELLNESS

Through health and nutrition we can renew our severed relationship to food and its source. Wellness is not about being counted as a prevailing statistic of obesity, poverty, nor the criminal justice system. **Tools for Wellness provides opportunities to re-establish the mental and physical connection to our food source and its cycle**, and bring communities together to empower themselves for future continuity and longevity.

TOOLS FOR CUTTING-EDGE EDUCATION

Through an agricultural-based curriculum we can leverage an abundant agricultural industry and economy that already exists. Cutting-Edge Education is not about schools with 80% drop-out rates, chronic absenteeism, and being left out of the work force. **Tools for Cutting-Edge Education rebuilds the foundation of agriculture in the region and create meaningful opportunities where they did not exist before.**

TOOLS FOR COMMUNITY

Through planning and design, we can rekindle our relationship to landscape and nature. A true placemaking. This is not a community of freeways, strip malls, used car lots, and fast food joints. **Tools for Community is an opportunity to re-connect our communities to the land, its heritage and history. Stewardship to the land establishes a stronger voice for engagement and leadership.**





FOCUS: COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT

Wonderful College Prep Academy is a 200,000 s.f., K-12 public charter school on a 15-acre campus in Delano, CA. It provides an innovative curriculum that includes STEM and Health and Wellness Education while emphasizing both career and college prep courses.

The Academy's site is configured as three academic villages with courtyards—high school, middle and elementary—that act as communal centers around which classrooms are organized. The center of the campus

opens up along its north-south promenade to allow connections between the various villages and become the communal hub for student life.

With lofty goals for this project came a great responsibility: a familiar challenge of ensuring effective and impactful use of every dollar spent. The client's mission stretched beyond students attending classes to the broader community, staff, and employees of their companies.

Thinking of the long-term value of a facility, flexibility is key. Anticipating the multiple potential uses of each space structured a strong client-architect collaboration. The client was an active participant in the design and execution of this new campus with far-reaching impact on the community.

TOOLS FOR WELLNESS

TOOLS FOR WELLNESS PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES TO RE-ESTABLISH OUR CONNECTION TO FOOD SOURCE AND ITS CYCLE, AND BRING COMMUNITIES

TOGETHER TO PROVIDE A PATH FOR FUTURE CONTINUITY AND LONGEVITY.





The Wonderful Company is the most significant agricultural employer in California's Central Valley. Many residents who live in Delano are either directly or indirectly associated with the company as its workforce. The project stakeholders are part of a broad education initiative founded by The Wonderful Company. As a result, a diverse array of educators, researchers, and community leaders have come together to raise the bar towards designing for equity and wellness.

One of the central tenets of the Academy is Wellness and Health. This region, like many others, has high levels of chronic diseases such as obesity and diabetes. **The school's focus on health and nutrition aims for a ground-up, holistic approach to the community's sustainability and its future longevity and success. The concept of wellness as a design strategy is rooted in the importance attributed to transparency, flexibility, and interactivity in the planning process.**

In addition:

- **The school's dining facilities foster an experiential and interactive relationship with food by emphasizing 'Seed to Table' concepts and nutrition awareness.**
- **A learning kitchen was designed as an interactive classroom with access to both the main dining hall and the edible garden and the outdoors.**
- **An active lifestyle is encouraged by the available track and gym facilities, as well as numerous amenities such as walk paths, play areas, and meadows and arroyos.**

THE DINING FACILITY CELEBRATES FOOD AND SHARING OF MEALS IN A DYNAMIC, CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENT WHERE THE PREPARATION OF FOOD IS VISIBLE AND CONNECTED.

Harvest Hall

The image shows a spacious, modern dining area. The ceiling is high with exposed steel trusses and numerous long, linear light fixtures. The walls are primarily white and blue, with a prominent blue wall on the left featuring the text 'Harvest Hall' in large, orange, sans-serif font. The floor is a light-colored, polished concrete. In the foreground, there are several long, orange, rectangular tables with built-in wooden benches. In the background, a service counter with various food stations is visible, with several people standing and interacting. The overall atmosphere is bright and open.

TOOLS FOR CUTTING-EDGE EDUCATION

TOOLS FOR CUTTING-EDGE
EDUCATION REBUILDS THE
FOUNDATION OF AGRICULTURE
IN THE REGION AND CREATE
MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES
WHERE THEY DID NOT EXIST
BEFORE.

EDUCATION IS AN INVESTMENT
IN A FUTURE WORKFORCE THAT
TAPS INTO THE RICHNESS OF
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION
IN THE MARKETPLACE FOR A
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.





K-5 BUILDING
(UNDER CONSTRUCTION)

DINING HALL
& KITCHEN

EDIBLE
GARDEN

GYM

PLAY COURTS

PARKING

DROP
OFF

CAMPUS PROMENADE

LUNCH
SHELTER

OLIVE
GROVE

HIGH
SCHOOL
COURTYARD

NATURAL
PLAY
AREA

OLIVE
GROVE

OLIVE
GROVE

ADMINISTRATIVE
BUILDING

6-8 GRADE
BUILDING
(B)

MIDDLE
SCHOOL
COURTYARD

OUTDOOR
LAB

PLAY
COURTS

6-8 GRADE
BUILDING
(A)

OUTDOOR
LAB

9-12 GRADE
BUILDING
(B)

GARDEN

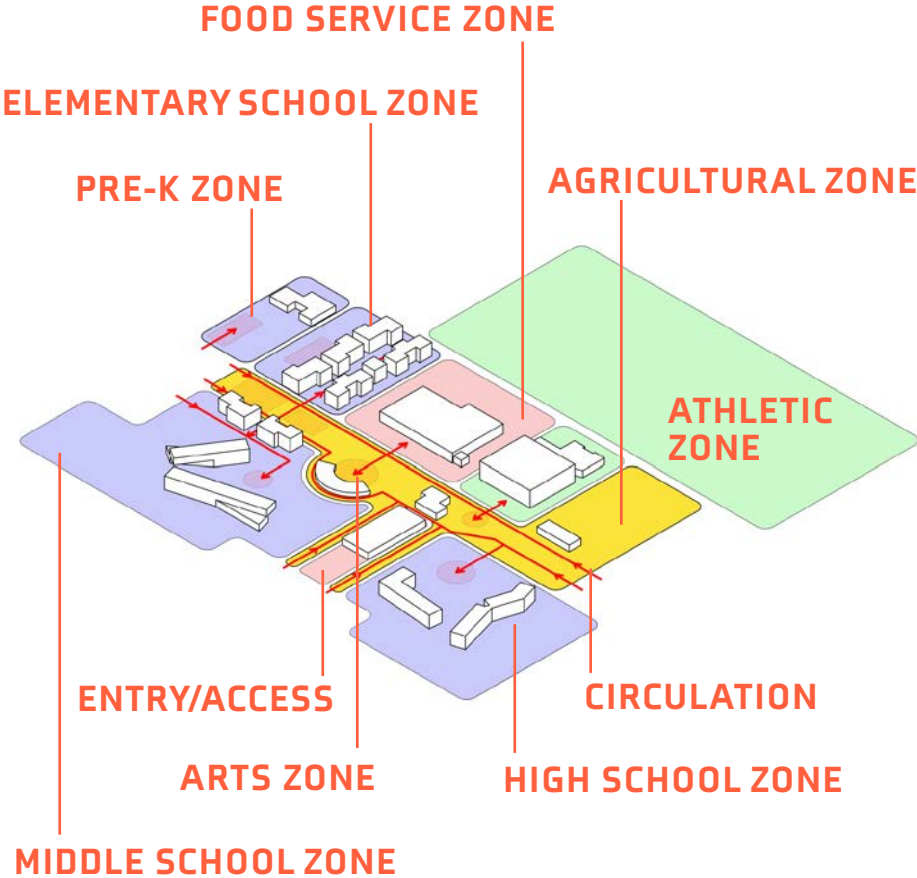
9-12 GRADE
BUILDING
(A)

GABION FIELDS

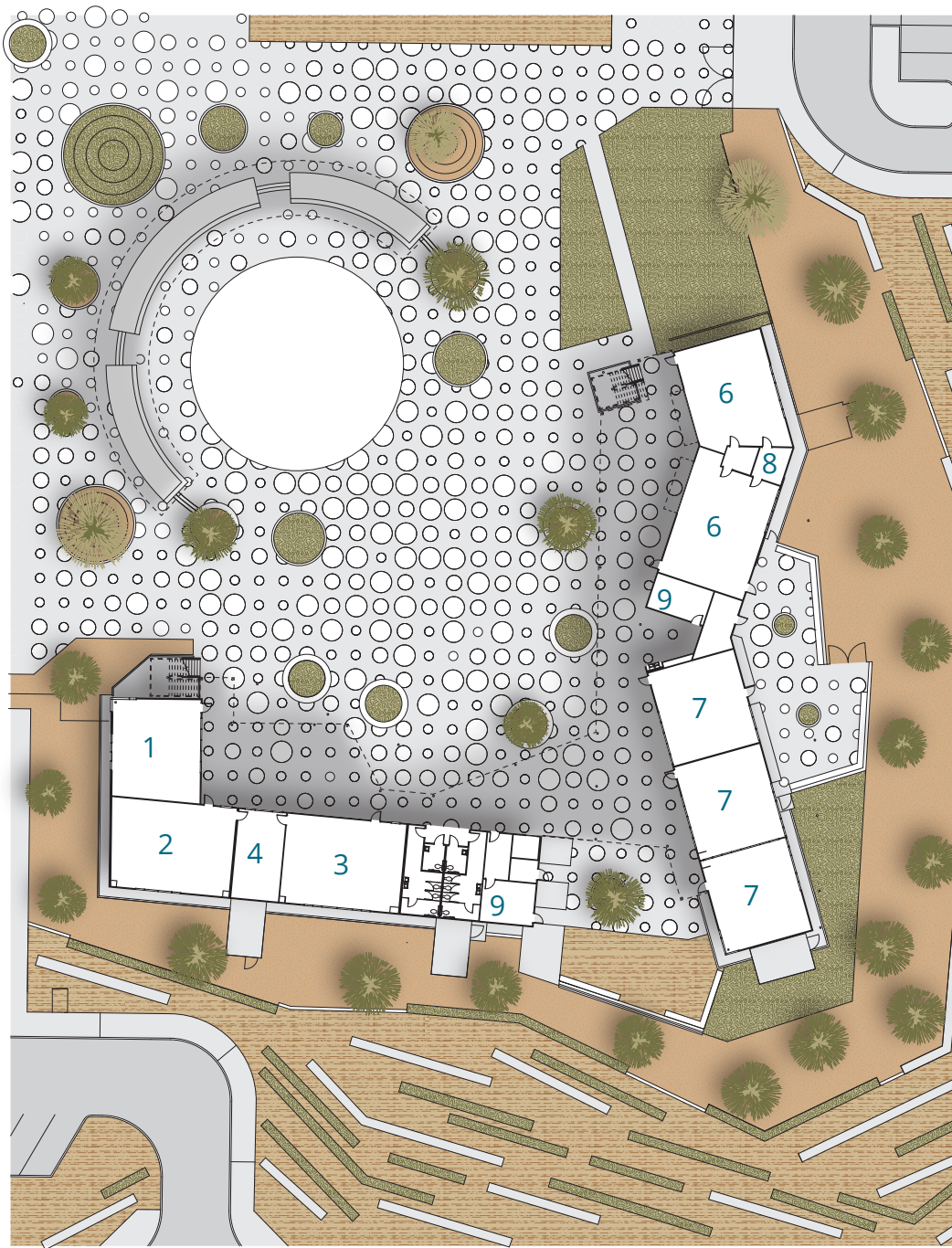
CAMPUS
ENTRY



The campus centers around three main academic villages and its courtyards that serve as central hub of student life. Each set of classroom buildings are conceived as unitized 'blocks' that allow for a progression of massing and scale to serve different student age groups and grade levels.



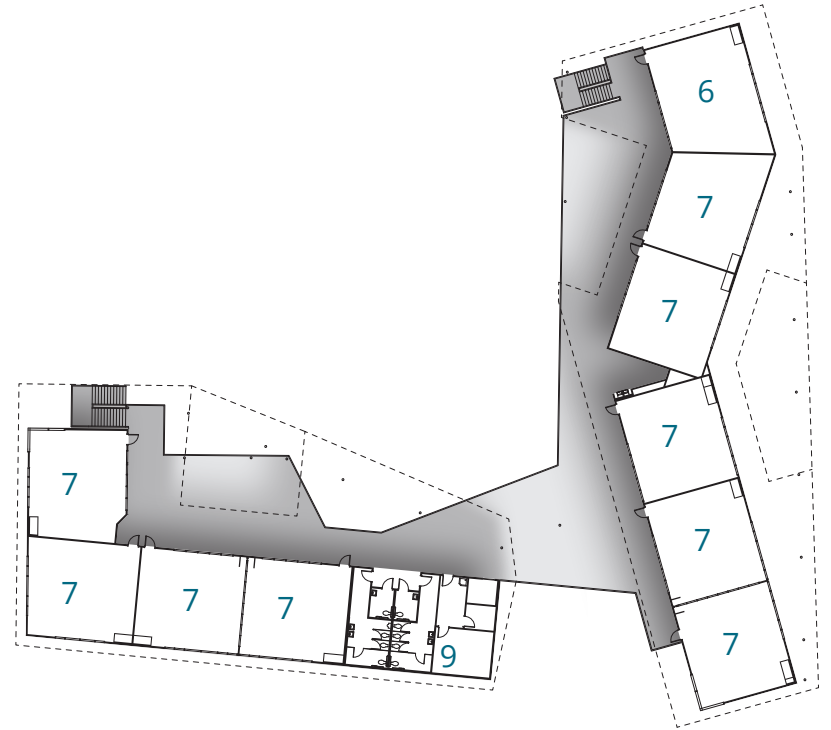
Campus Zoning and Circulation Diagram



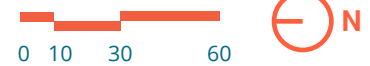
Floor Plans: High School

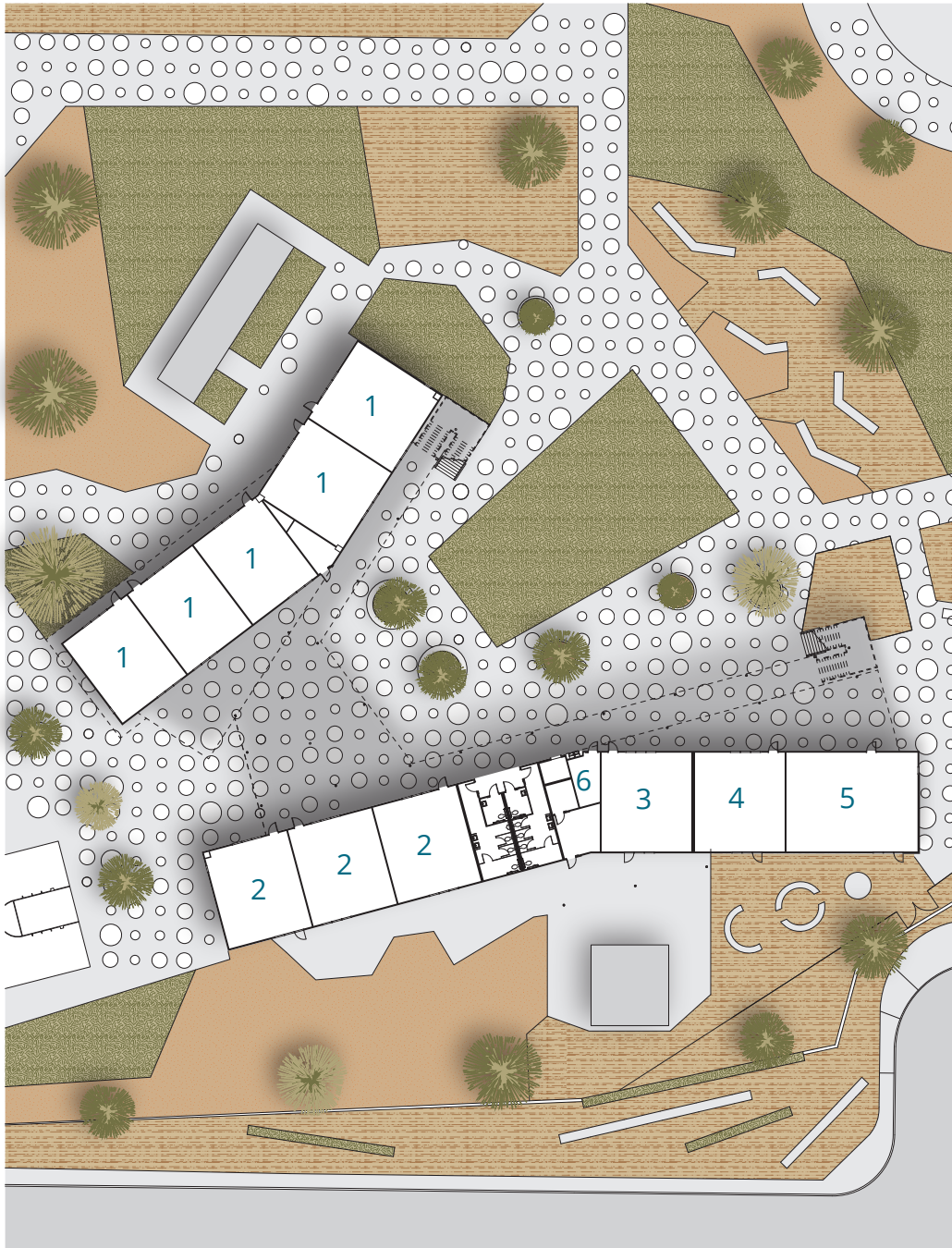
Level 1

- 1 Science Classroom**
- 2 Biology Classroom**
- 3 Chemistry Classroom**
- 4 Prep Room**
- 5 Workroom**
- 6 Art Classroom**
- 7 Classroom**
- 8 Kiln Room**
- 9 Storage**



Level 2

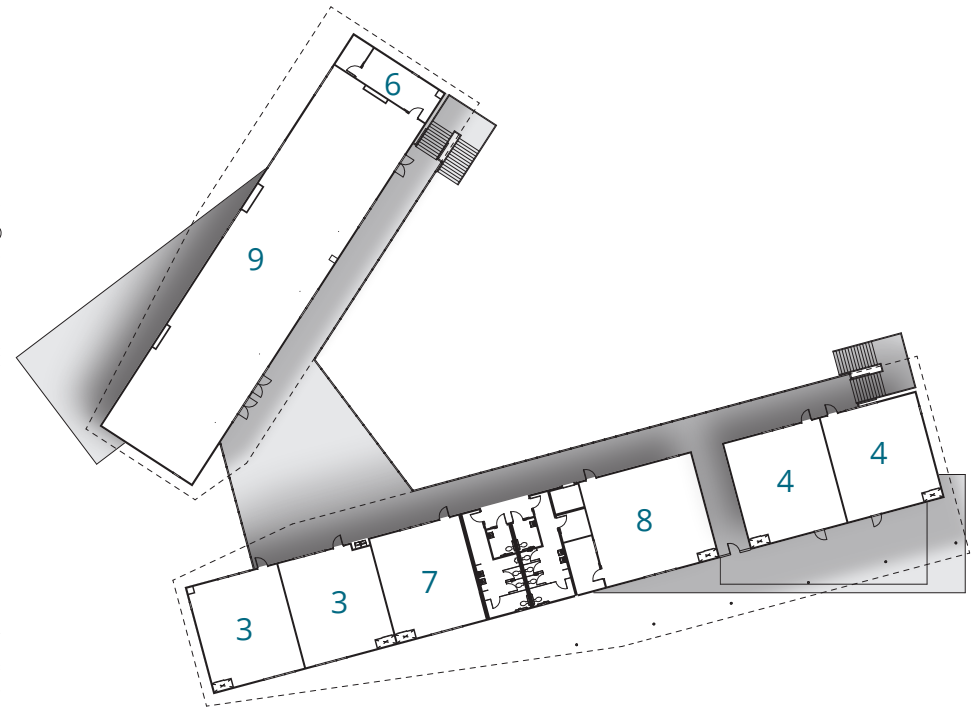




Floor Plans: Middle School

Level 1

- 1 5th Grade Classroom**
- 2 6th Grade Classroom**
- 3 7th Grade Classroom**
- 4 8th Grade Classroom**
- 5 STEM**
- 6 Workroom**
- 7 Art Classroom**
- 8 Music Classroom**
- 9 Math Lab**

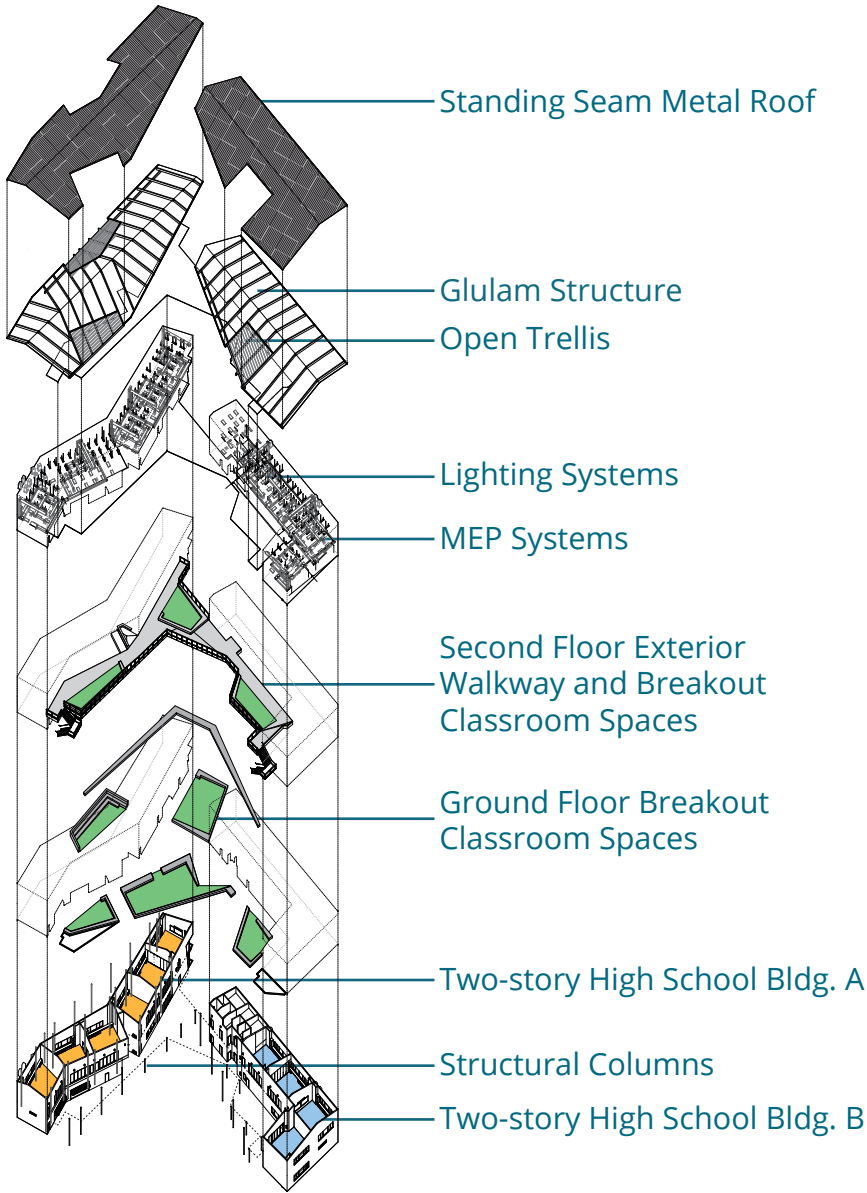
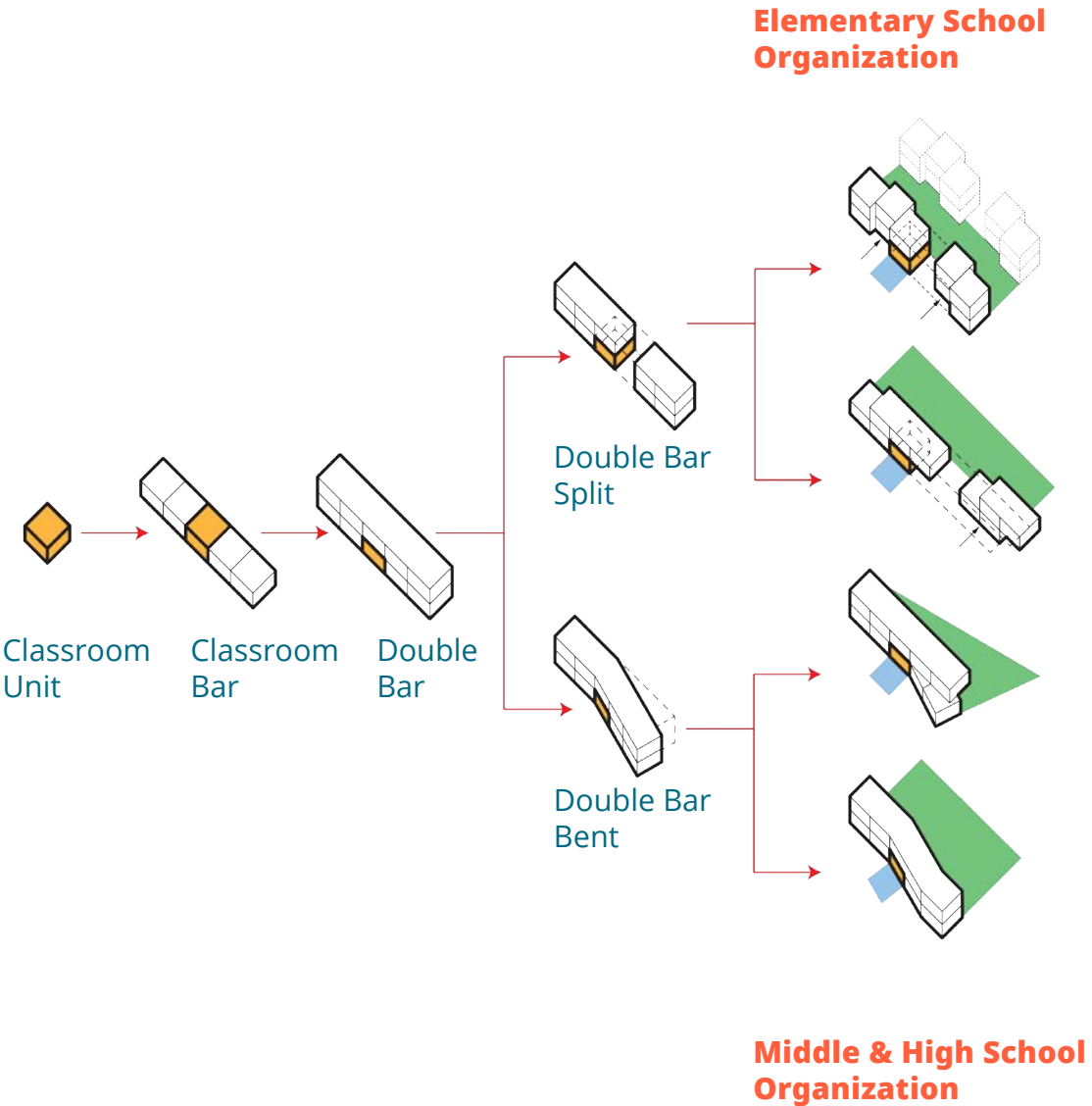


Level 2



ORGANIZATION OF BUILDING BLOCKS

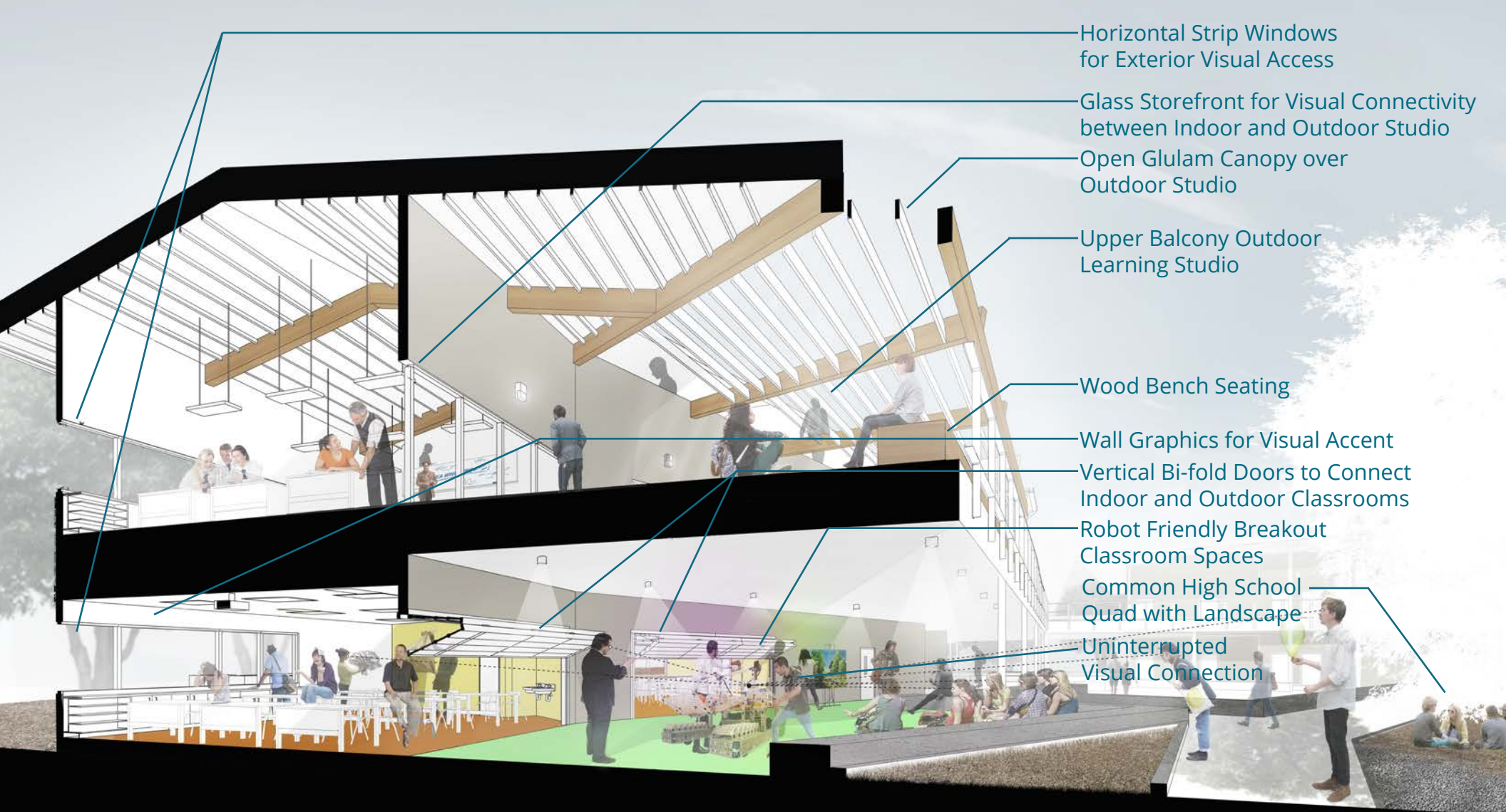
Blocks of space within each academic village establishes a particular relationship between indoor learning and outdoor breakout spaces.



SPATIAL ANATOMY OF STEM CURRICULUM

21st Century-learning illustrates Opportunities for Different Modalities of Learning. Educators do not have a fixed mode of

teaching class. The classroom extends to the exterior breakout spaces in which learning becomes incredibly dynamic.



- Horizontal Strip Windows for Exterior Visual Access
- Glass Storefront for Visual Connectivity between Indoor and Outdoor Studio
- Open Glulam Canopy over Outdoor Studio
- Upper Balcony Outdoor Learning Studio
- Wood Bench Seating
- Wall Graphics for Visual Accent
- Vertical Bi-fold Doors to Connect Indoor and Outdoor Classrooms
- Robot Friendly Breakout Classroom Spaces
- Common High School Quad with Landscape
- Uninterrupted Visual Connection



EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION: FROM THE GARDEN, TO THE LAB, AND TO THE KITCHEN

The school project embraces diversity in learning and acknowledges that learning happens in various ways. One size does not fit all.

The design of the classrooms provides a framework for creating breakout spaces, outdoor pods, and learning gardens that allow both social and emotional learning as well as reflective and independent study.



TOOLS FOR COMMUNITY

THE PROJECT SEIZES AN OPPORTUNITY TO RE-CONNECT OUR COMMUNITIES TO THE LAND, ITS HERITAGE AND HISTORY, AND ESTABLISH A STRONGER VOICE FOR ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP.

LIKEWISE, PLACEMAKING ENHANCES THE BOND BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND THEIR LAND.



LANDSCAPES

The campus design draws on the explicit regional landscape of the Central Valley in its agricultural context. **For example, the field of 'gabion' walls that border the campus relate to the 'furrows and grooves' of local agrarian fields and groves of trees mirror traditional farming of almonds and olives.**

STRUCTURES

Building roof forms and overhangs are inspired by local agricultural ecology of vernacular structures, natural resources, and landform. The project utilizes clear-span glulam beams that allow for large cantilevers and overhangs to create a roofscape that mirrors the nearby Sierra Nevada Mountains. **The efficiency of glulam structure helps to minimize thickness and heaviness of beams and columns and help buildings to integrate seamlessly with the landscape.**

ECOLOGY

The choice of building color, materials, and landscape palette was directly influenced by the transforming desert ecology of the Central Valley and the on-going concern for lack of water. **All plants used on the campus such as native grasses, local species of cacti, Palo Verde, and mature olive trees are selected for their drought-tolerant properties.**





LIGHT AND SHADE

One of the significant challenges of the Central Valley is the hot weather—temperature fluctuation between sun and shade is 20 degrees! **Our integration of overhangs and canopies provides a flexible outdoor space for group learning and activities without being exposed to the heat and keeps their classrooms cool.**

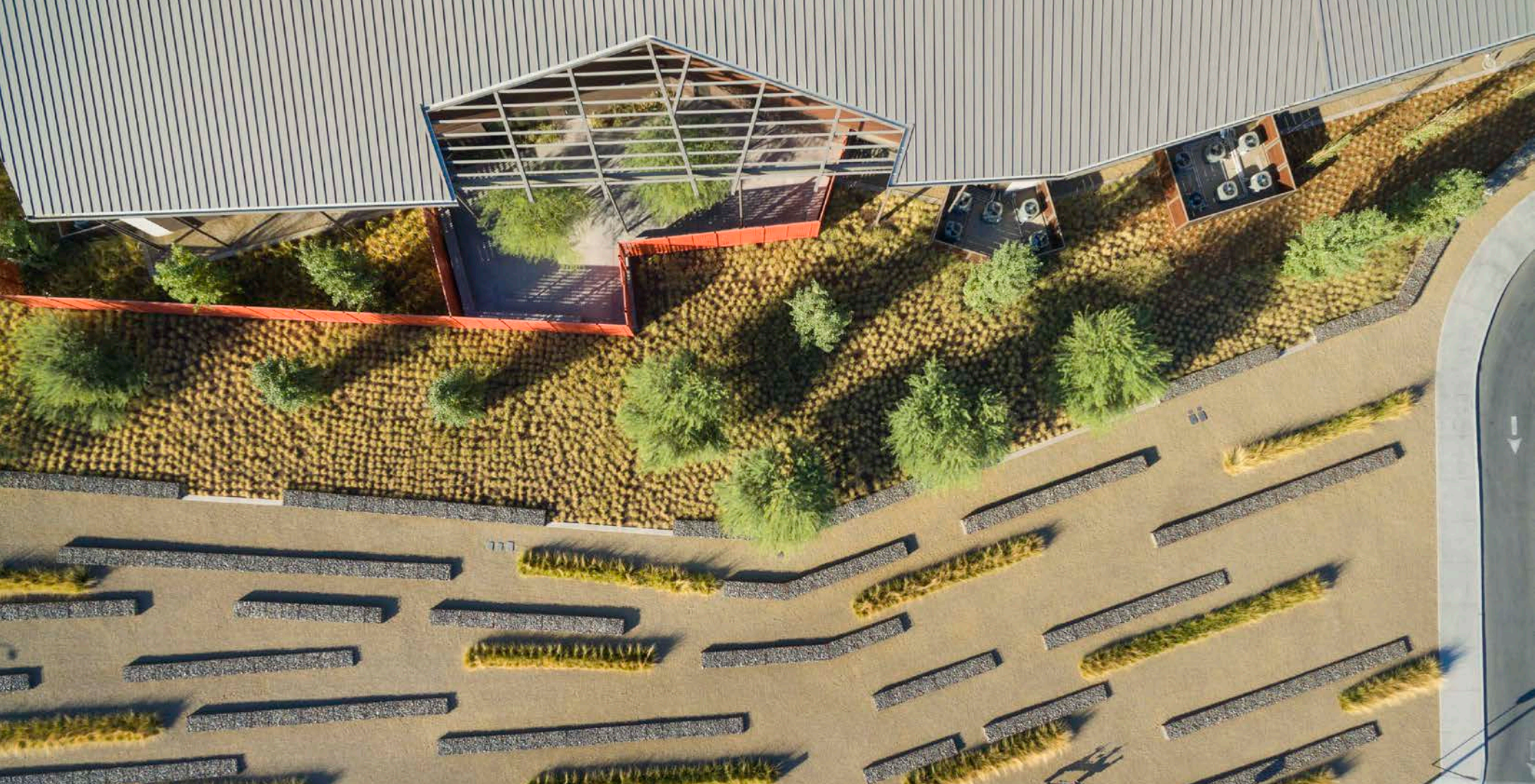
Daylight and natural ventilation are encouraged via operable ribbon windows at the street façade and large storefront glass along the courtyard to allow students to be better interconnected to the natural environment and promote that learning should be made visible and celebrated.



WELLNESS, CUTTING-EDGE EDUCATION, AND BUILDING A COMMUNITY FOR RENEWAL

The Wonderful College Prep Academy is a one-of-a-kind, flagship initiative that **integrates STEM curriculum and 21st century-learning to prepare its students academically for college and create a new model for inter-disciplinary curriculum.**

A big part of its inter-disciplinary educational goal is to broadcast the importance of nutritional awareness and teach Wellness and Health for both the students and the community.



Many of these goals are already being met. The Academy has created both college prep and career pathways for students.

Early results show 88% of the class of 2018 attending four-year universities. An even more remarkable number when contrasted with the San Joaquin Valley-wide rate of 18%.

Larger goals to impact the region's health and wellness standards are harder to measure, though all indications point to a shift in thinking and living that students are taking home to their families.

The Academy is a place that restores equity and inclusion in education in an underserved but a vibrant community. It is a place of opportunity to re-imagine and re-build their future and community.

