

Richard R. Oliphant Elementary School
Desert Sands Unified School District





The design team was tasked with creating an innovative learning environment that is a model for learning and be a source of civic pride.

Richard R. Oliphant Elementary School is a new school for the Desert Sands Unified School District. The site is an 11-acre lot in a developing area of Indio, a rapidly growing region in eastern Riverside County, California.

The major challenges of building on this site were: **site access**, the harsh **desert sun**, and **constant winds**. These challenges ultimately shaped the overall design solution. With site access being limited to one edge, careful consideration had to be given when planning for vehicular and pedestrian circulation. In an environment where the temperatures can reach well in the 100's protection from the sun is a must. The wind in this area is a major obstacle that also needed to be solved in order to provide a protective, safe environment for students and staff.

Inspired by its natural desert environment, a limited color pallet and the use of simple forms allowed us to focus on textural changes in the façade material (plaster, corrugated metal, and perforated metal) that provided a more tactile building.

A solar panel covered canopy welcomes visitors to the campus and serves as a teaching opportunity for the community.

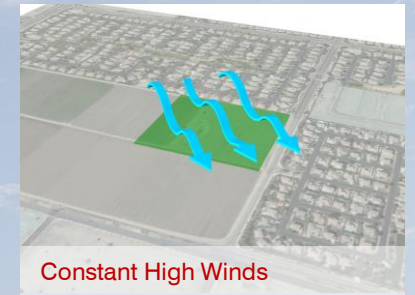
Three building blocks organized around a central courtyard provide security for the campus and protection from the wind. The eastern wing of each village cluster opens to engage the exterior courtyard and create an interactive, collaborative interior and exterior learning environment.

All these elements come together to create a beautiful, innovative learning environment and be a source of civic pride for the community

Scope of Work and Budget

58,000 SF	PROJECT SIZE
11+ ACRES	ACRE TOTAL SITE
600	STUDENTS (K-5TH)
\$25.7M	CONSTRUCTION BUDGET
FALL 2018	COMPLETION DATE

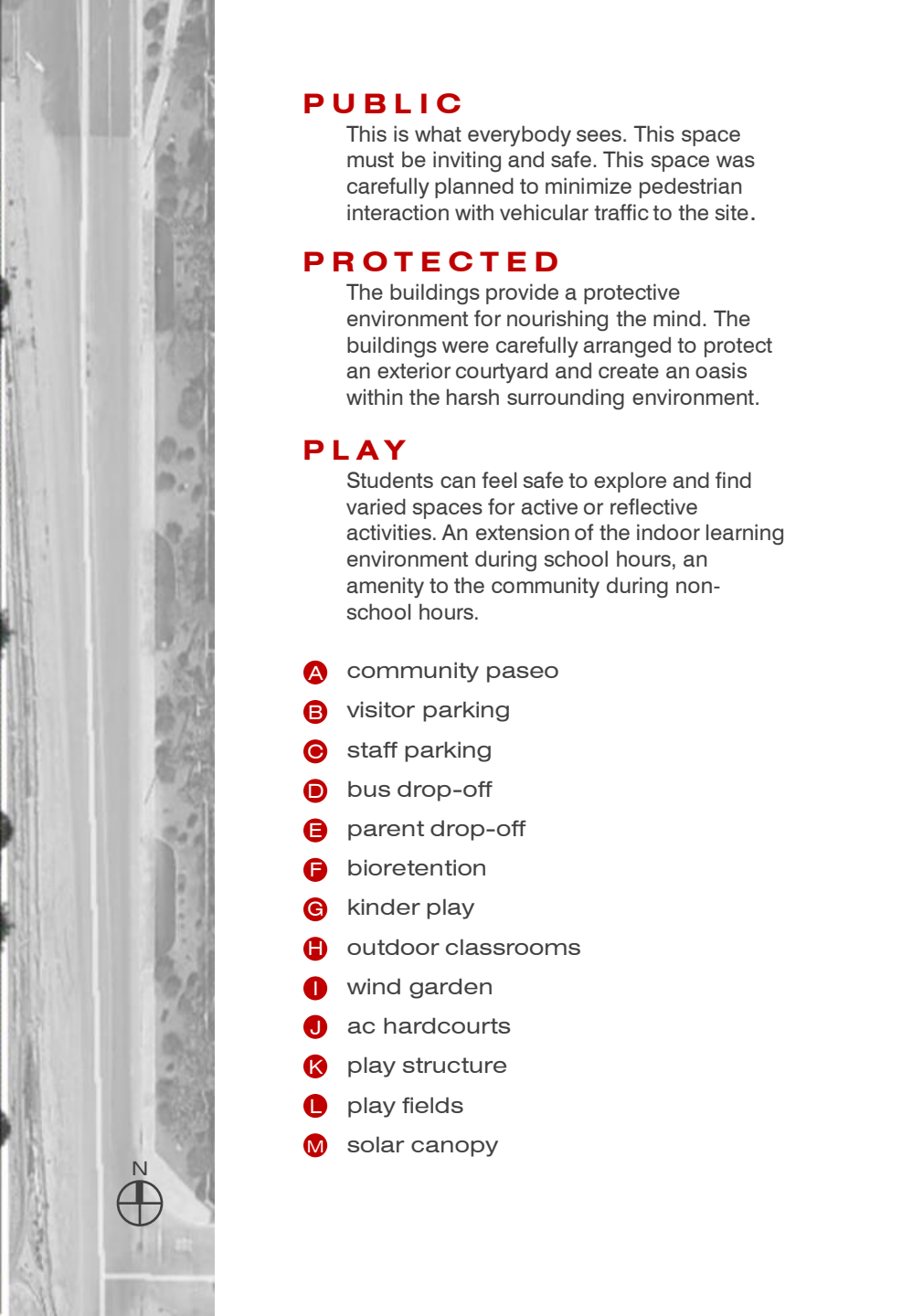
Located in a place known as the 'City of Festivals', home to Coachella and Stagecoach, two of the largest music festivals. The community is situated in the desert region bordered by the Little San Bernardino Mountains and Indio Hills to the East and the Salton Sea to the South. Richard R. Oliphant Elementary School will be the first school in this new community.



PLAY

PROTECTED

PUBLIC



PUBLIC

This is what everybody sees. This space must be inviting and safe. This space was carefully planned to minimize pedestrian interaction with vehicular traffic to the site.

PROTECTED

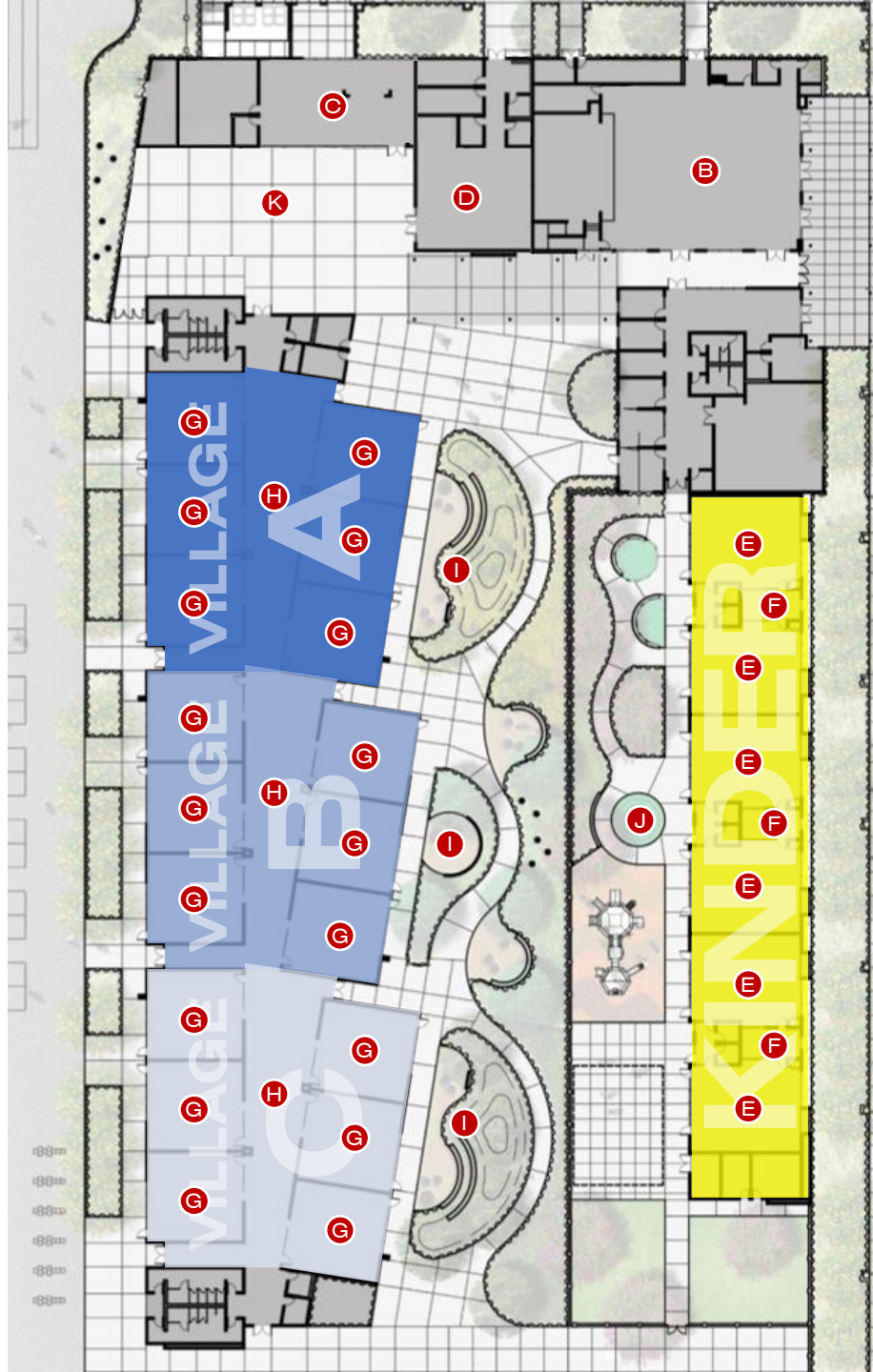
The buildings provide a protective environment for nourishing the mind. The buildings were carefully arranged to protect an exterior courtyard and create an oasis within the harsh surrounding environment.

PLAY

Students can feel safe to explore and find varied spaces for active or reflective activities. An extension of the indoor learning environment during school hours, an amenity to the community during non-school hours.

- A** community paseo
- B** visitor parking
- C** staff parking
- D** bus drop-off
- E** parent drop-off
- F** bioretention
- G** kinder play
- H** outdoor classrooms
- I** wind garden
- J** ac hardcourts
- K** play structure
- L** play fields
- M** solar canopy





- A** administration
- B** multipurpose room
- C** library
- D** food services
- E** kinder classroom
- F** shared workroom
- G** classroom
- H** learning commons
- I** outdoor classroom
- J** kinder play
- K** lunch shelter

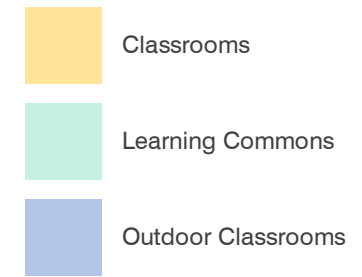
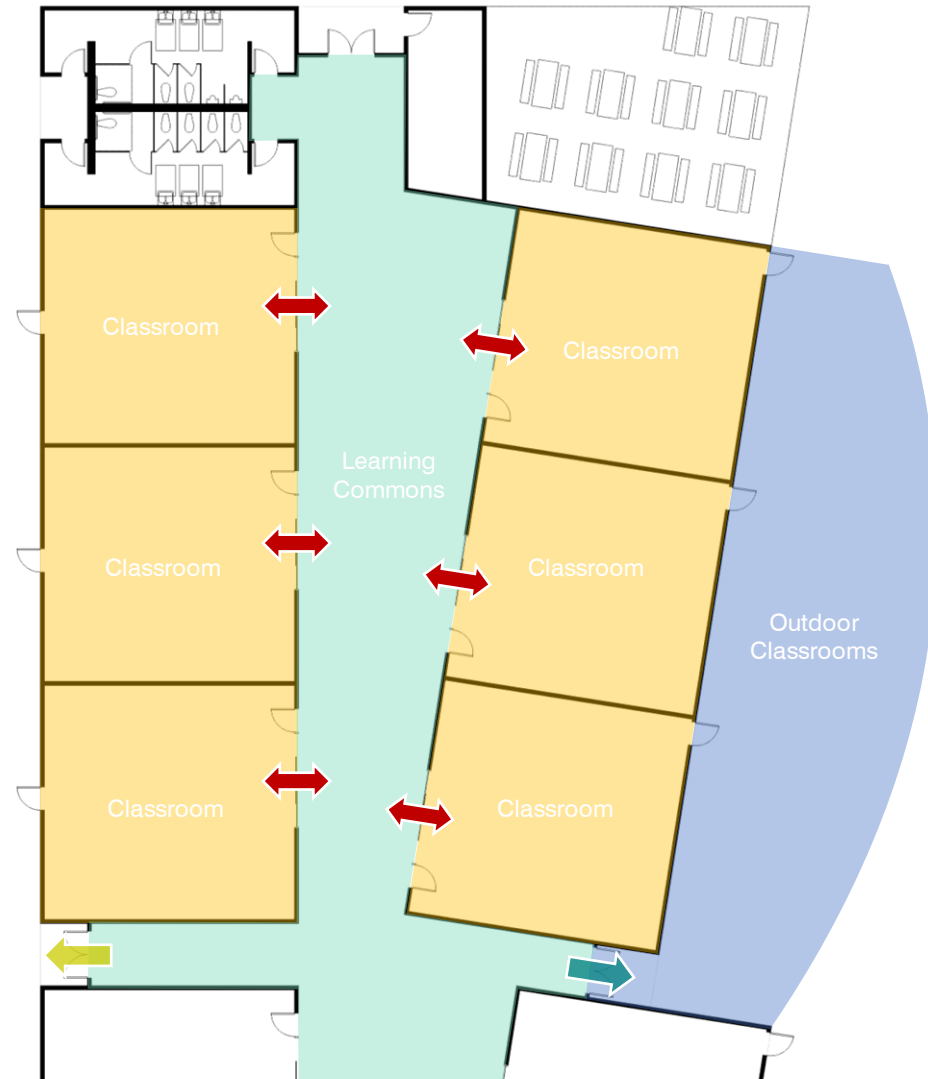
Through extensive studies by a fully integrated design team and input from the stakeholders of staff and District leaders, it was determined that the right solution was a master plan organized with perimeter buildings around a central courtyard.

By minimizing exterior circulation, providing light monitors that supply daylight into each learning commons, and recessing and protecting building fenestration we were able to both take advantage and protect occupants from the sun.



Learning Village

A six-classroom village surrounds a learning commons. Operable glass walls that open to common areas. This not only offers a visual connection when closed but provides an additional learning zone for students and teachers to utilize as a collaborative group or individual learning.



- Sliding glass doors allow classrooms to expand into the shared learning common.
- Doors from the learning common give access to the shared outdoor classroom, further expanding the learning space.
- Doors from the learning common also provide direct access to the exterior play area.

Learning Village

Bold interior graphics coordinated to connect with the planting palette associated with the exterior learning space connected to each village. This created ease of wayfinding as well as connection to nature.



'I feel way more connected with team & staff, and it creates an environment of sharing and collaboration that we would never have had with a solid wall between us. It creates a sense of community and family.'

**Ms. Shipley
1st grade**

Learning Commons

North facing light monitors provide each learning commons with natural light. Multiple learning tools are established in each learning village including monitors for digital display, tackable wall board and writeable walls. These along with flexible furniture offer students different learning zones to collaborate with their peers and educators.

'I love the visibility & it allows me to have small groups working in both the classroom and the colab spaces while keeping an eye on both at once. We were worried about distraction at first with the glass, but the kids get over it quickly and they focus when they need to focus. It's not an issue and is the least of our concerns now.'

**Mrs. Dauto
2nd grade**

Classrooms

Classroom environments are more adaptable to support students in everyday learning. Having flexible classrooms means teachers have the capability to utilize their educational space to perform different channels of learning and can focus on adaptations of different learning styles of students.



'We use the inclusion model and the learning commons can become an extension of the classroom. Looking outside you're only seeing MORE learning so it's not a distraction. The glass becomes a 5th whiteboard and another teaching surface. I love it!'

**Ms. Nelson
3rd grade**

Protected Exterior Learning

Outdoor learning provides another tool for educators to support students in day-to-day learning. With writeable walls, auditorium seating and other learning tools, staff have necessary means to provide students with the same experience outdoors as they do inside.



Exterior Classrooms

Building placement allow for these exterior classrooms immediately outside the interior learning commons to be used as additional learning space even on the windiest of days.



‘What a beautiful, state-of-the art school. 600 students inhabit this \$31 million learner facility. Flexible learning spaces, technology, and great teachers equal a recipe for success.

Scott Bailey

Exterior Classrooms

In an environment where wind is a major obstacle for exterior activities, the design team was able to create a protected exterior oasis for kinder play and provide outdoor collaborative learning spaces.



Kinder Play

Common hard surface features such as four-square, ball walls and basketball courts are provided to students to enjoy physical activity in the outdoors. Age-appropriate structures are provided at all age groups. Appropriate surfaces and materials are applied to ensure students can utilize outdoor play throughout the year.



Sustainable Features



LED lighting & controls reduces LPD by 46% from ASHRAE 90.1

8



22.6% better than T-24 energy code

6

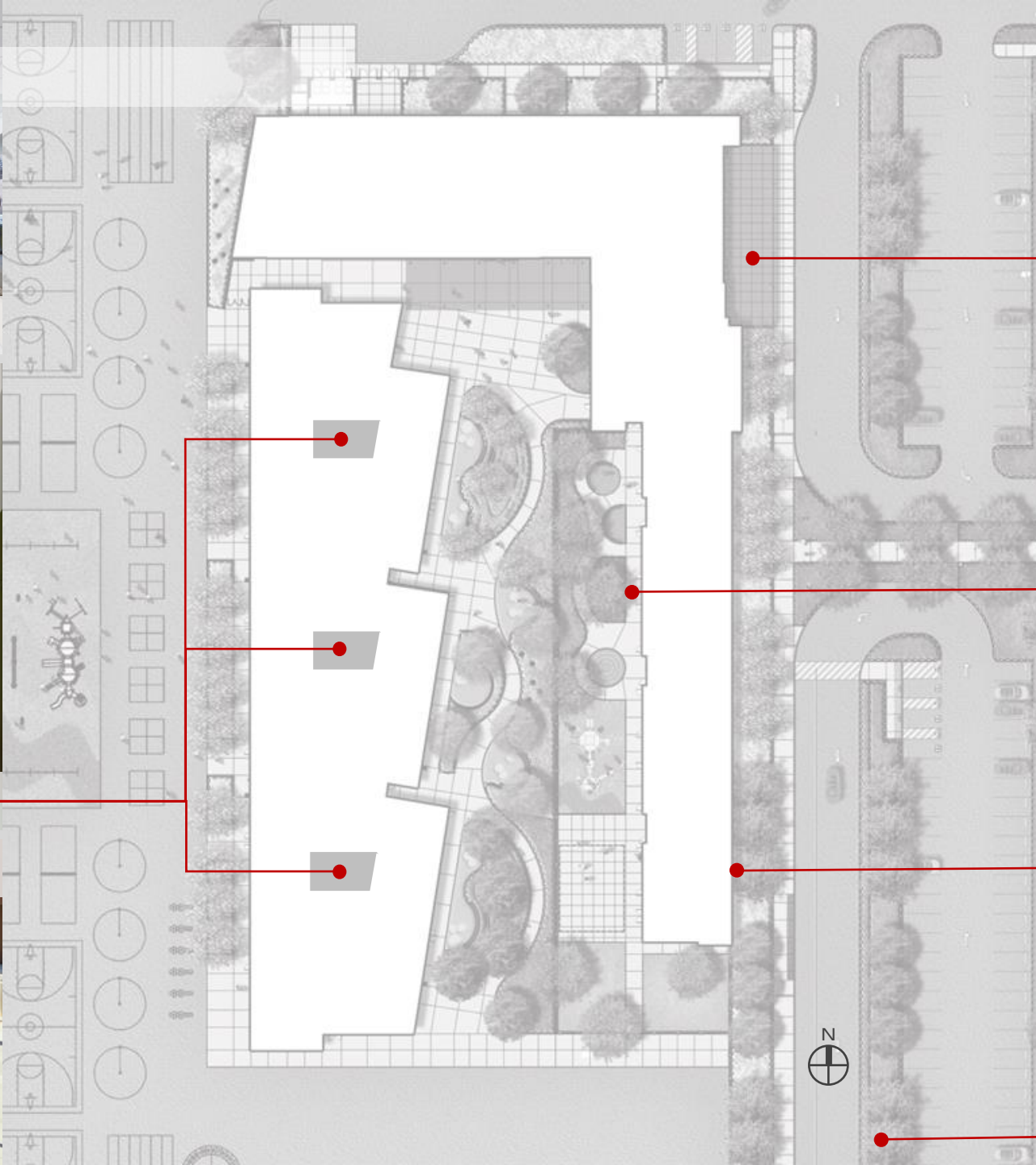


North facing skylights bring natural light into the space

5

Native plant material reduces portable irrigation use by 60%.

7



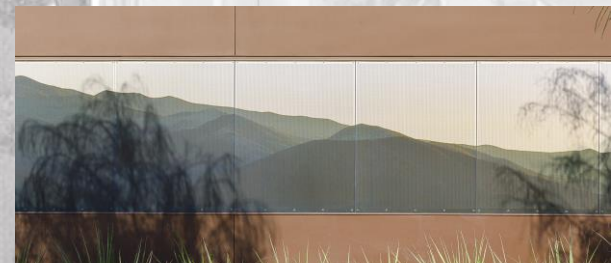
PV panels shade entry and provide renewable power

1



Building overhangs shade windows and classroom entries

2



Perforated metal screen allows view while controlling solar gain

3



Detention basins with drywells return 100% of stormwater to aquifer

4

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