

WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Total Revival on a Budget





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Washington Elementary School Renovation illustrates that the education adequacy of space can be achieved, even with a tight budget. This transformation demonstrates the incredible power of partnership between education leaders and their community to envision and demand innovative educational environments despite limited resources. Washington ES embarked on this transformational journey, to challenge their status quo to find answers to their academic challenges and find ways to reengage their students, staff and parents.

The task at hand was to transform an existing 29,000sf CMU block building into a modern, 21st-century learning environment, on a budget of \$5.7 million (approximately \$195/GSF). Beyond the transformation of the physical environment, this project also needed to transform the campus' culture from a feeling of dejection to a vibrant and energized student-centered campus that fosters student and staff engagement, promotes project-based immersive learning, and embraces 21st-century facilities, flexible furniture, and teacher training, all with the aim of achieving significant academic improvements.

To achieve these goals, a focus on flexibility and adaptability was central to the design, where classrooms and common areas are transparent and equipped with movable furniture and multi-purpose spaces. Daylighting strategies and energy-efficient systems contribute to sustainability and wellness. The result is a revitalized campus where students and staff are fully engaged, test scores have risen, and community support has surged.

Washington Elementary School's transformation is a prime example of how education spaces can transform from the traditional learning spaces of the past to vibrant, energized spaces of learning to support today's students. It not only addresses academic needs but also fosters a renewed sense of pride and engagement within the school and its surrounding community. This project's success has set the stage for further transformations in the District, proving that Facilities + Furniture + Training indeed equals Student Success.

SCOPE OF WORK + BUDGET

The scope of work for the Washington Elementary School renovation encompassed a comprehensive transformation of the original 1949 classroom building and the 1979 addition, covering a total area of around 27,000 square feet. This involved relocating administrative offices, creating a Library commons, upgrading the kitchen/dining area, and renovating 11 classrooms with pull-out rooms. The project introduced extensive daylighting, LED lighting, and high-performance HVAC systems while incorporating flexible furniture to enhance learning spaces. A neighborhood pathway concept within the Library Commons added to the design’s uniqueness. The budget for this transformation project was approximately \$6.3 million, amounting to about \$235 per gross square foot. Despite the tight budget, the project successfully revitalized the educational environment, fostering community engagement and innovation in teaching methodologies.

GRADES K-5	STUDENTS 625
BUDGET \$6.3 M	SIZE 27,000 GSF
ORIGINALLY BUILT 1949 / 1979	

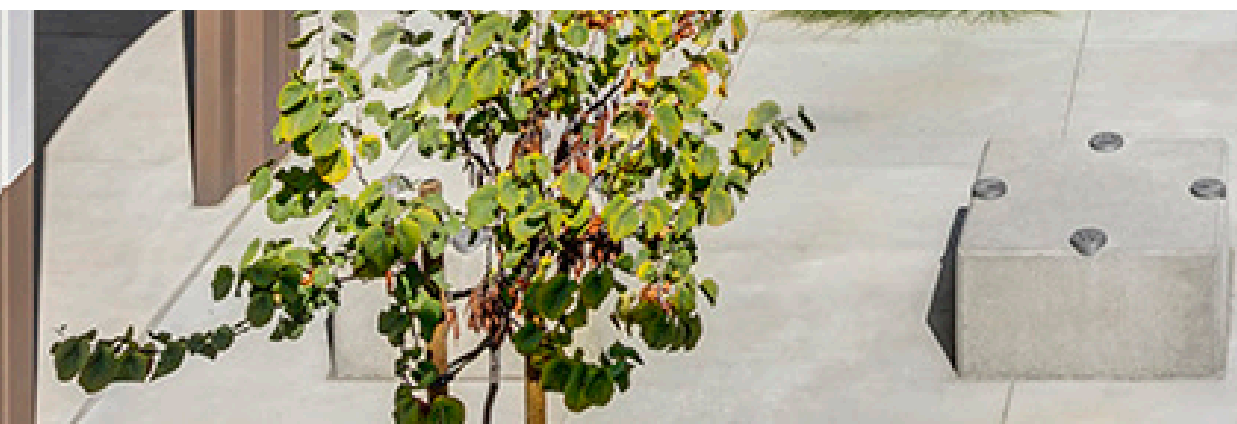


SCHOOL & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Community & Stakeholders

The community surrounding Washington Elementary School is diverse population located within the city of Pomona, California. It is a blend of urban and suburban neighborhoods. A significant portion of the population is of Spanish-speaking background, with approximately 97% of students at Washington Elementary School having Spanish as their primary language. Historically, the immediate neighborhood had faced challenges related to crime, which contributed to the decision to construct the 1979 addition to the school without exterior windows.

Key stakeholders included the school district, teachers and staff, students, parents, and the entire surrounding community. Each of these stakeholders had a unique role to play in the project's success, with their engagement and collaboration collectively contributing to the significant impact it had on the students, teachers, and the entire community within a tight budget.





SCHOOL & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Challenges & Assets

The project faced a unique set of challenges, requiring creative solutions within a tight budget. The student-teacher ratio was a significant challenge, with a diverse student body and a high percentage of Spanish-speaking students. Additionally, the community was marked by socioeconomic disadvantages, student homelessness, and a historically high crime rate, necessitating a safe and secure learning environment.

However, this project benefited from several available assets. The Pomona Unified School District's leadership and financial support provided the foundation for change. The existing campus infrastructure offered a canvas for transformation, and the community's engagement, including local resources, volunteering, and advocacy, played a pivotal role in overcoming challenges. Effective budget and cost management strategies ensured that financial constraints were navigated while still achieving project goals. The alignment of these assets and a commitment to innovative education led to a successful transformation that significantly impacted the students, teachers, and the broader community, fostering positive change in a challenging environment.

24:1 STUDENT
TEACHER RATIO

90% SOCIOECONOMICALLY
DISADVANTAGED

14% STUDENT
HOMELESSNESS

60% ENGLISH LEARNER
STUDENTS

CRIME RATE 40/1,000
ONE OF THE HIGHEST IN US

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Value of Process & Project to the Community

The renovation project has breathed new life into the community by fostering a sense of engagement and pride in the school. Improved academic performance, reduced crime, and enhanced safety attest to its profound impact. Sustainability and innovation are embodied in flexible, eco-friendly spaces fostering engaged, active learners. This project showcases the strength of community engagement, where disenchanted parents became powerful advocates for their school, increasingly participating in and supporting the educational process, marking a positive shift in the community’s involvement with the school. It embodies a holistic, lasting change that goes beyond physical transformation, bringing hope, pride, and opportunities to students, teachers, and the wider community.



**EMPOWERED
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

**IMPROVED
ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE**

**CRIME
REDUCTION &
IMPROVED
SAFETY**

**SUSTAINABLE
TRANSFORMATION**

**EDUCATIONAL
INNOVATION**

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Before Zonal Map



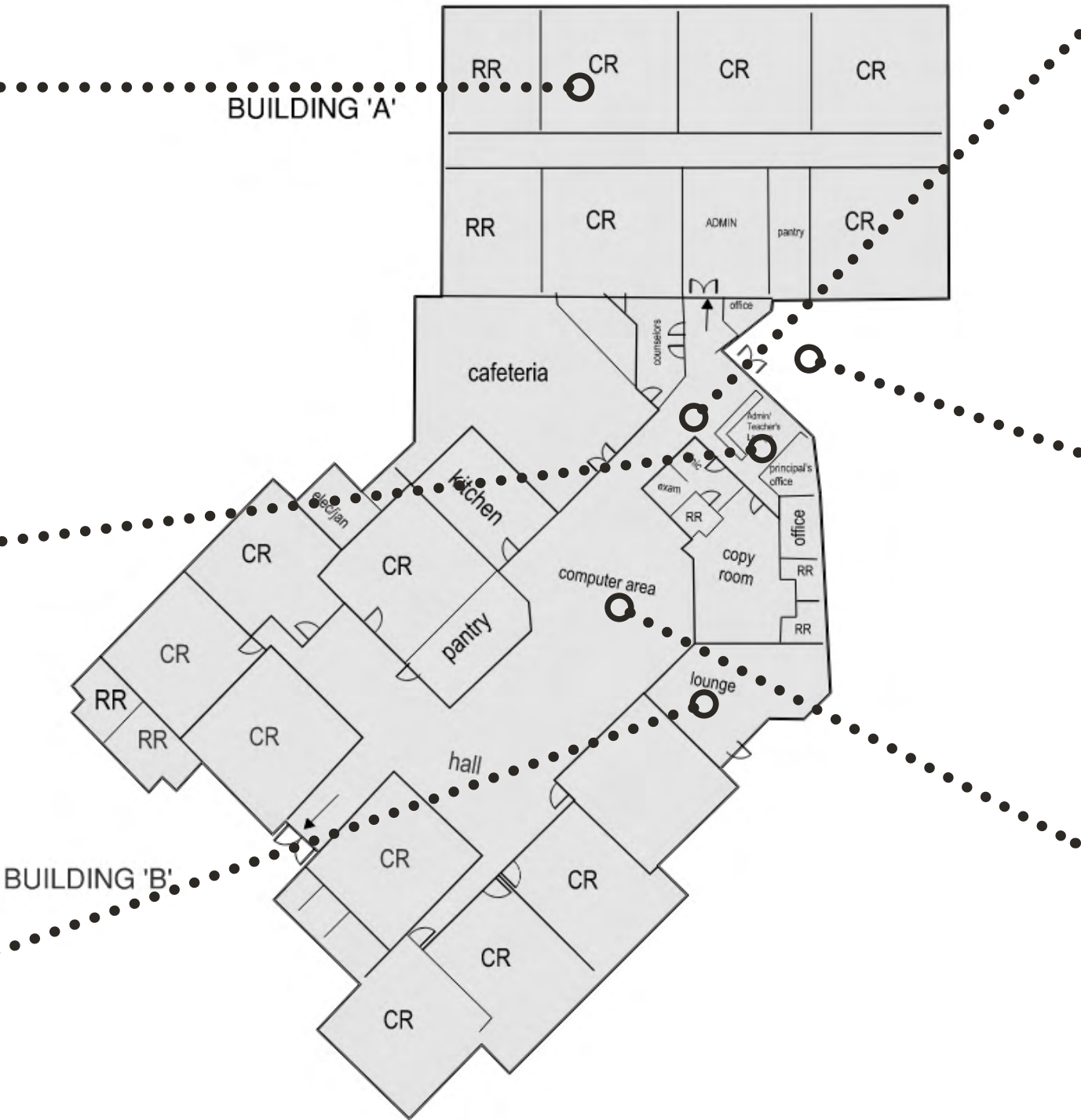
CLASSROOM



ADMINISTRATION



COMMONS / LOUNGE



COMMONS



ENTRYWAY



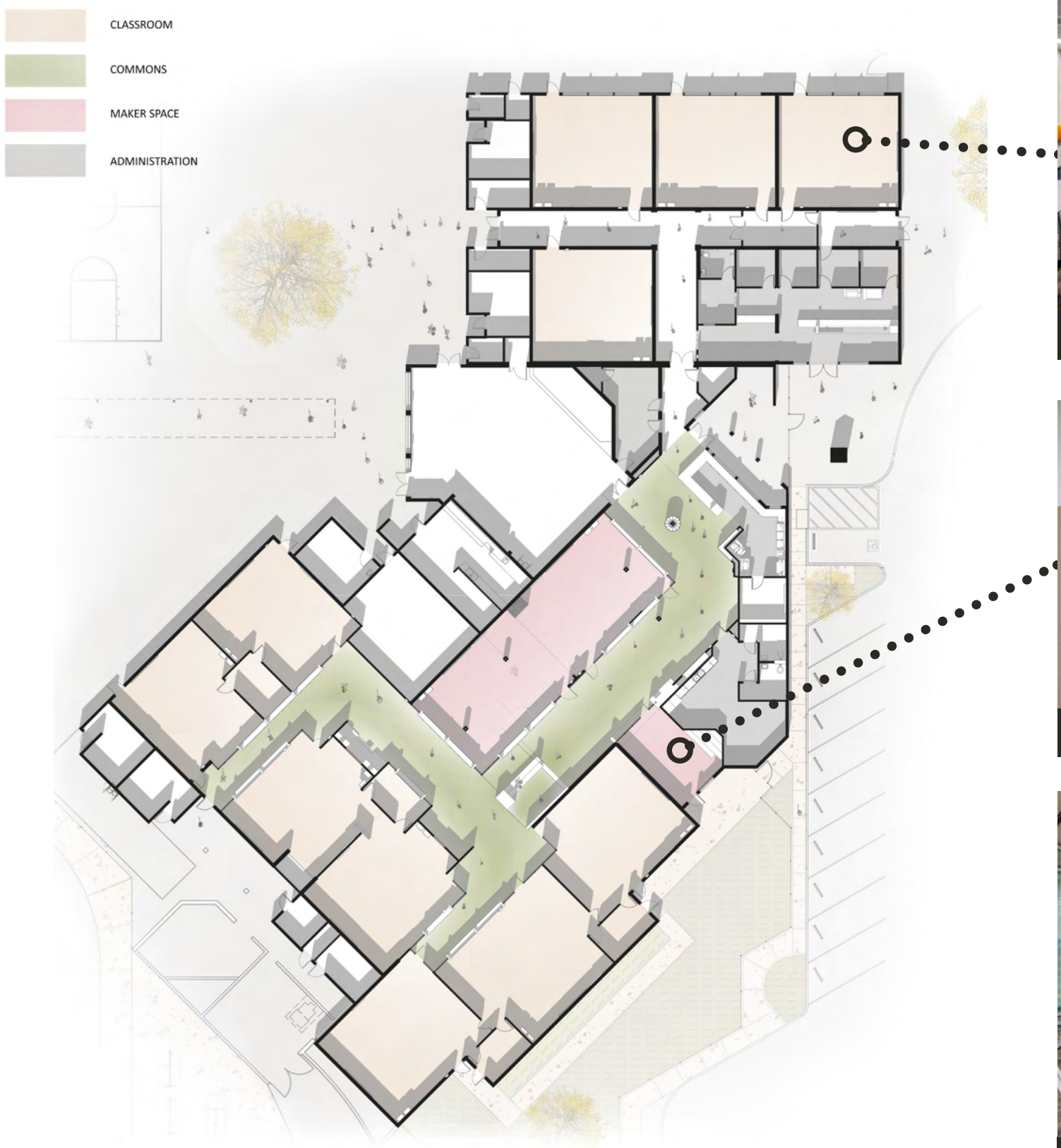
LIBRARY

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

After Zonal Map



COMMONS



CLASSROOM



ADMINISTRATION



MAKER SPACE



COMMONS



MAKER SPACE

EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Vision & Goals

The educational vision at Washington Elementary School is to create an engaging, dynamic learning environment that fosters academic excellence, critical thinking, and student empowerment. The goal is to shift from traditional teaching to project-based learning, where teachers act as mentors, inspiring students to take responsibility for their education and develop a love for learning.



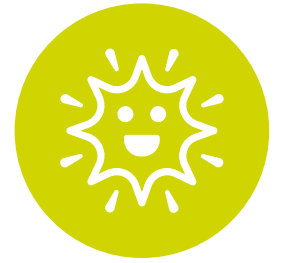
COMMUNITY



**HEALTH &
WELLNESS**



INCLUSION



**JOY OF
LEARNING**





EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Learning Happens Everywhere

The environment complements the curriculum by providing spaces where learning takes place everywhere, not just within the classroom. Small group pull-out areas, green screen rooms, and maker spaces support hands-on, project-based learning. The library commons encourages individual reading and learning, reflecting the school's commitment to diverse learning experiences.

The environment caters to various learning and teaching styles by offering a range of flexible spaces and movable furniture. Classrooms have no fixed furniture, enabling students to select the seating that best suits their comfort and engagement. The absence of traditional teacher desks encourages educators to be more dynamic and engage students in different ways.

Adaptability and flexibility are hallmarks of the environment. Movable furniture and flexible spaces offer students and teachers the freedom to configure their learning environment to suit their specific needs. The absence of fixed elements in classrooms encourages innovative classroom layouts, adapting to different teaching and learning styles, and ensuring an ever-evolving and adaptable educational space.



FLEXIBLE SPACES



DAYLIGHTING



**"NEIGHBORHOOD"
LIBRARY**



**IMMERSIVE
LEARNING**

An aerial photograph showing the Washington Elementary School campus. The school consists of several large, light-colored buildings with flat roofs, arranged around a central paved area that includes a playground and parking spaces. To the left of the main school buildings is a large, cleared dirt area with some construction equipment, indicating a recent renovation or expansion project. The school is situated in a residential neighborhood with many single-story bungalow-style houses, each with its own fenced yard. A major road runs along the bottom left of the image. The overall scene depicts a well-maintained educational facility integrated into a community.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Community Context

The facility fits seamlessly within the larger context of the community, offering a safe and comfortable neighborhood for students to focus on learning. It reflects the community's surrounding bungalow-style residences and their comfort in having fenced yards. The project engages the community, building a sense of pride, as parents and residents actively participate in and support the educational process, aligning the school with the neighborhood's feel.

Washington
Elementary School

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Inspire & Motivate

The project inspires and motivates through the creation of a safe and comfortable “neighborhood” for learning. It provides a fun and dynamic environment where students want to be, encouraging student responsibility for their learning. Flexible furniture accommodates various learning styles, motivating students to succeed. Project-based learning introduces relevance and a drive for success. Teachers, now mentors rather than lecturers, motivate students to learn and take responsibility for their own success.



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Sustainability

High performance and sustainability were integrated throughout the project's planning and design. Daylighting solutions, such as Solatubes and Circulite skylights, reduce energy usage and costs. LED lighting can be color tuned to mimic the Circadian Rhythm, further improving energy efficiency. High-performance energy-efficient HVAC systems were incorporated, and building insulation was added to reduce cooling load demand. Metrics such as reduced energy consumption and improved indoor air quality were used to evaluate sustainability and wellness outcomes, ensuring a healthier and more eco-friendly learning environment for the community.



RESULTS

The Washington Elementary School Renovation and Transformation stands as a testament to the incredible power of a holistic approach to educational facility design within a tight budget. Despite significant challenges, the project achieved a remarkable complete transformation with tangible results across the board.

In terms of educational goals, the project moved beyond mere physical renovation to foster an innovative learning environment. Shifting from traditional teaching to project-based learning, it inspired teachers to become mentors and students to embrace active learning. Test scores have surged, reflecting a fundamental achievement in academic excellence. The school district's primary goal was investing in a struggling campus to improve academic performance, and this project has proven instrumental in that pursuit. As the lowest-performing elementary school in the district, Washington Elementary now charts a path for lifelong learning and success.

The transformation also brought unintended yet immensely positive results. Teachers have embraced the change in teaching methodologies, creating a more engaging and interactive learning experience for students. Furthermore, the project motivated the community to become active participants in the educational process, strengthening ties between the school and its neighborhood.

The project demonstrates the profound impact that educational transformation can have even within the constraints of a tight budget. By aligning educational, district, and community goals, it has created a lasting legacy of positive change, inspiring both students and their surrounding community to strive for excellence.





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