

Full Day Kindergarten / 21st Century Learning Environment

The Primary School, the District's only K-2 school, needed an extensive renovation and addition to accommodate full day kindergarten. The design team added 14 new learning areas necessary to implement the full-day kindergarten program while transforming the 1950's building into a 21st-century learning facility, with additional capacity for grades 1 and 2.

The new secure entrance leads to a bright lobby corridor that links the new cafetorium and kitchen addition to the library, and classroom corridors. Shared teacher workrooms are located between twelve of the new classrooms. Movable glass walls dividing classrooms and workrooms provide the staff with flexible teaching configurations. The existing auditorium was repurposed as a multi-function space, including a library, makerspace, and support service offices. The flexible cafetorium includes space for after-school programs. The expanded and flexible library celebrates reading and literacy. The auditorium was repurposed into a flexible cafeteria and multi-purpose room was space for after school programs.

The building's mechanical system was replaced with an economical chilled beam installation that provides for heating and cooling through-out the building. The reconfigured bus loop accommodates all buses on site and expands faculty and visitor parking.

The courtyard includes a variety of learning and interactive spaces, including an amphitheater gathering circle in the main lawn area, an interactive formed creek bed to collect rainwater, and a monarch butterfly garden, all of which offer a gateway to nature and outdoor learning. Looking out into the courtyard, it gives students a chance for their minds to wander creatively and relax while looking at nature. The outdoor space includes two new ADA playgrounds for school and community use.

AIA's Framework for Design Excellence

Design for Equitable Communities:

Student-centered teaching and learning methods create equitable engagement opportunities and help establish a community Sense of Place. This project establishes a Sense of Place and creates a learning environment that is sustainable for the future. A place where students feel safe and have a sense of belonging, increasing their self-esteem and ability to achieve. There are four parts to creating a Sense of Place.

Activities:

What kind of environment has the district created for the students to take risks, what activities do they offer? Not all students have the same interests or talents. This project created a Sense of Place by giving students different learning spaces where they can find their passions or talents.

Meetings:

The District established a mission and vision statement it lives every day. When students and educators understand the district's mission and vision, they feel a sense of community and belonging. It helps them understand their role and enables them to accomplish their, the district's, and the community's goals.

Individual Features:

It's easier for students to create goals and opportunities for themselves when they understand what is expected of them. Every student at the Primary School understands those expectations, giving them knowledge and confidence to achieve their goals.

Physical Aspects and Features of Space:

The newly designed spaces make students feel physically and emotionally safe and that they are part of something greater than themselves. The school's Flexible Learning Environments create safe spaces for students, fostering a sense of place and community.

AIA's Framework for Design Excellence

Design for Change:

What does K-12 education look like in 20, 50, 100 years? Without knowing exact space needs, only Flexible Physical Learning Environments allow future space needs adaptation.

The combination of formal, social learning, and creative spaces create a holistic learning environment that promotes social emotional health and success for all students. Offering all three learning environments allows children to engage at their own pace, boosting confidence and improving social emotional health.

Formal spaces – classrooms, lecture halls, and laboratories - have evolved. Gone are the spaces that prioritize memorization and repetition over creativity and collaboration. Today's student-centered model is designed with the flexibility to accommodate multiple functions.

Social learning spaces and informal spaces are where social interaction happens in smaller groups. Lounges, corridors, commons, and courtyards expand access to peer groups and foster social interaction.

Creative spaces, including breakout or collaboration spaces, help develop formal and social learning. These spaces can include the library, media center, or an adjacent connected room. Breaking out into smaller groups is an effective method for creating social and flexible learning environments.

Design for Wellness:

The new courtyard includes an outdoor classroom teachers utilize in their curriculum. The outdoor learning and interactive spaces include an amphitheater on the main lawn, an interactive formed creek bed to collect rainwater, and a monarch butterfly garden. The courtyard is broken up into several spaces for children to learn, explore, and play, offering a connection to nature. This connection helps students understand the natural world and how to navigate environmental challenges impacting our communities.

Community Impact

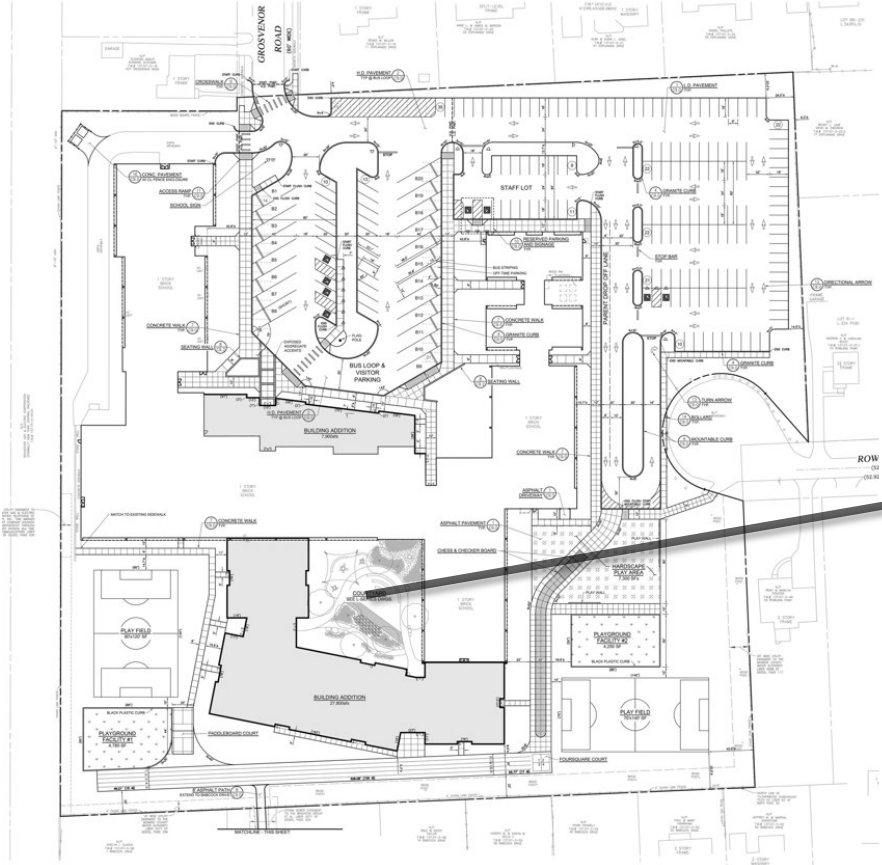
In 2015, Brighton Central Schools was one of the few remaining New York State school districts not providing full day kindergarten, though discussions about implementing it had been ongoing for decades. Following an extensive community engagement process, implementing full-day kindergarten became a District long-term goal and mission.

The project team conducted a Feasibility Study to find existing facilities within the district that could handle the renovations needed to house the program. The comprehensive and collaborative visioning process allowed for a well-vetted process where the community and other stakeholders had a structured way to give valuable input and insights. Following this process, Council Rock Primary School was selected as the site for the program.

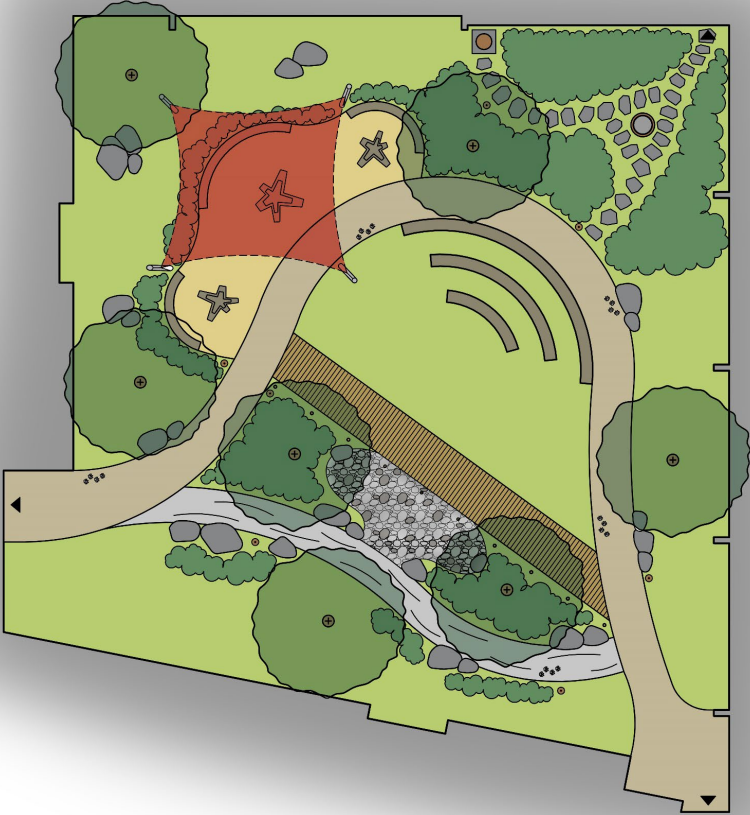
In addition to the building expansion to support full-day kindergarten, the design team used the project as an opportunity to transform the school into a 21st Century Learning Environment. This student-centered teaching method focuses on the student and incorporates flexible learning spaces that accommodate diverse learning preferences and foster equity and inclusion. In Flexible Physical Learning Environments, students are more engaged in the learning process and graduate better prepared to thrive in today's digitally and globally connected world.

This methodology aligns with the District's mission to realize the high aspirations the community has for its children and to equip students with knowledge, values, and skills that enrich their lives and enables them to become responsible, contributing citizens of a changing global community.

Site Plans

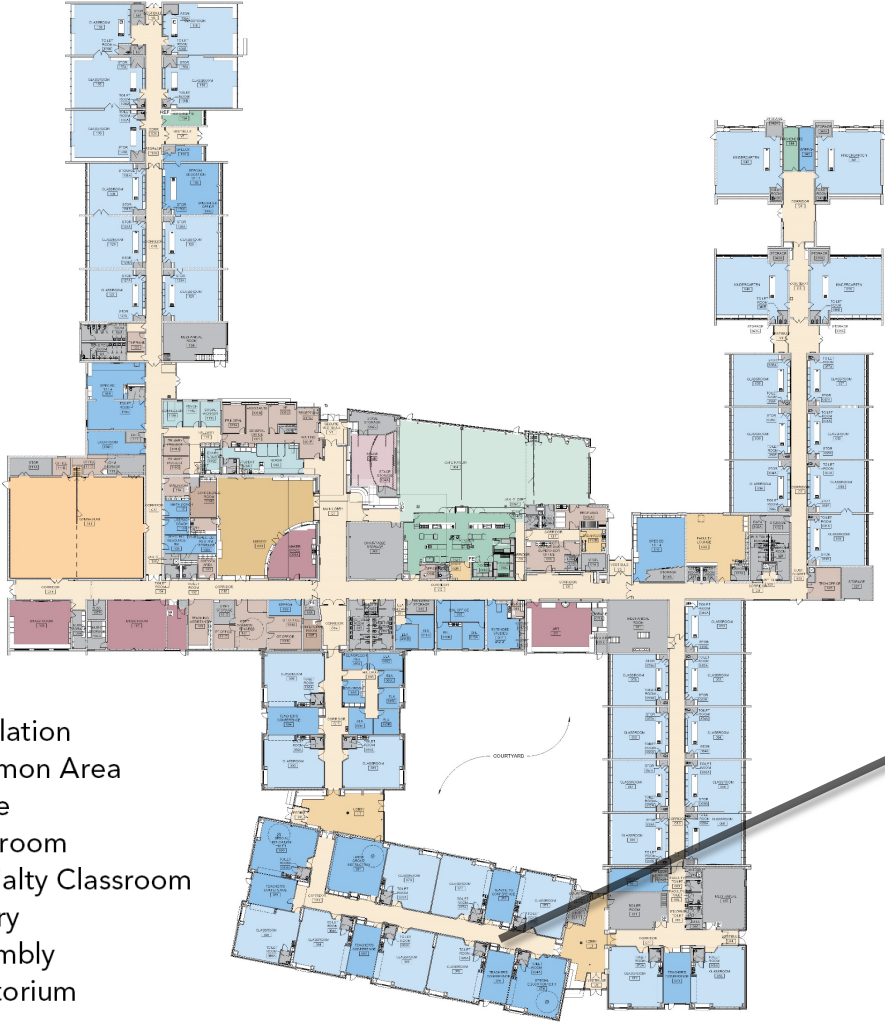


Building



Courtyard

Floor Plan



- Circulation
- Common Area
- Office
- Classroom
- Specialty Classroom
- Library
- Assembly
- Cafetorium
- Kitchen
- Health/Nurse
- Support/Restroom



Shared teacher conference rooms between classrooms

Images Credit: Designer

Site Aerial

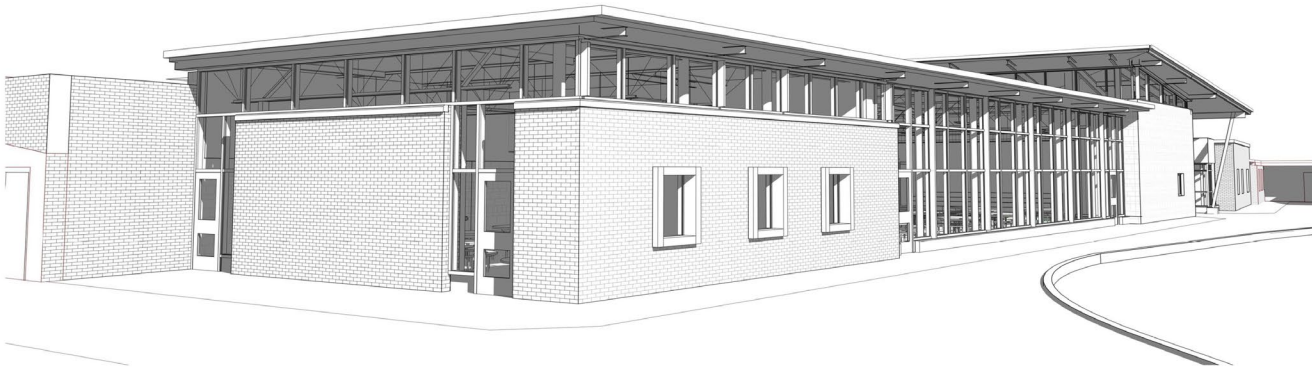




Front Entry Before



Secure Front Entry Design



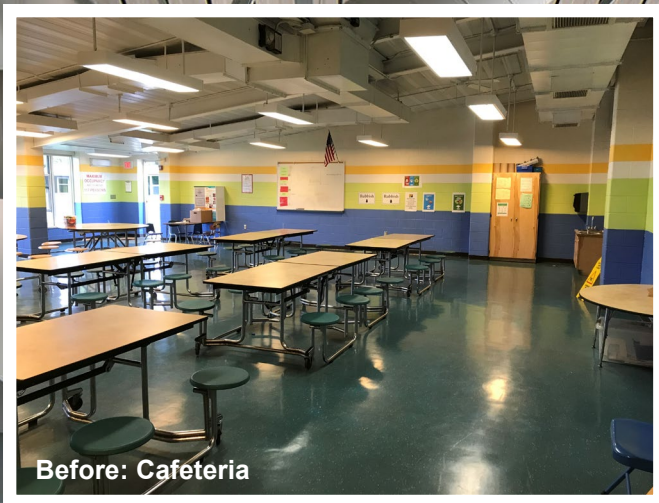


Secure Front Entry

Image Credit: Gene Avallone



The existing auditorium was repurposed as a multi-function space, including a library, makerspace, and support service offices.



Before: Cafeteria



The flexible cafetorium includes a stage and space for after-school programs.



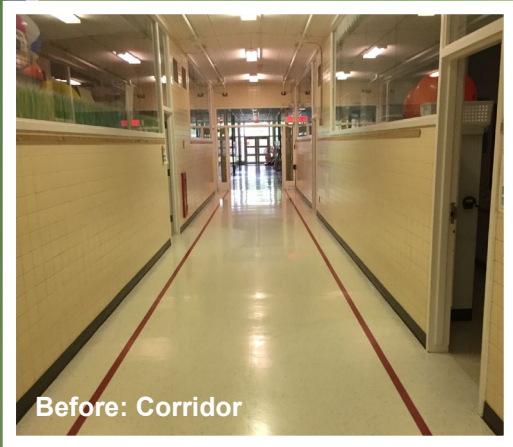
The kitchen footprint has been expanded to twice its original size and has two mirrored serving lines to service the additional student body and is visually connected to the Cafetorium.



Before: Classroom



The movable glass wall provides flexibility to combine or separate spaces into different teaching configurations, including flexible educational programs or for students' individual needs.



Social learning spaces and informal spaces - lounges, corridors, commons, courtyards - can greatly expand access to peer groups and foster social interaction.



The addition portion of the project enclosed approximately 13,300 SF of outdoor space at the center of the school, an opportunity to create space for outdoor learning.



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