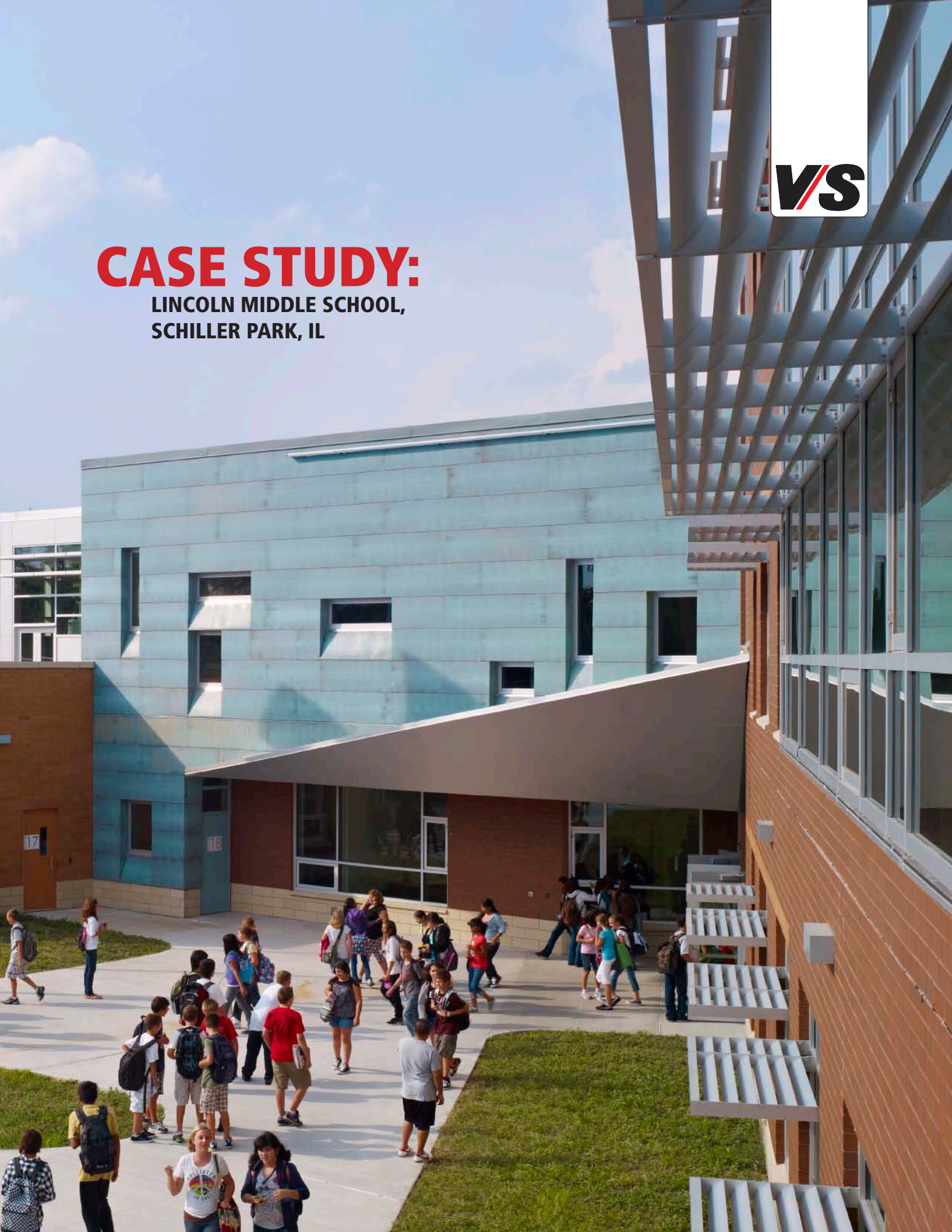




CASE STUDY:

**LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL,
SCHILLER PARK, IL**





Photography by Steve Hall at Hedrich Blessing Photographers and Jim Steinkamp



PantoSwing-LuPo | Series 901 | RondoLift

In a class all its own.

From dynamic, light-filled student "learning studios" to reading terraces and a rooftop garden, Lincoln Middle School (LMS) is changing the learning landscape inside and outside the classroom in Schiller Park, Illinois.

The school's design arose out of close collaboration between BrainSpaces, Inc. of Chicago, the project's educational planning consultant, and the LMS administration, teachers, students, staff, and community.

Through a series of focus groups, LMS Principal Constance Stavrou and Amy Yurko, President of BrainSpaces, encouraged the different constituencies to imagine the school of their dreams.

Students wanted places to socialize indoors and out, the ability to study and learn everywhere and comfortable furniture.

Teachers wanted classrooms that supported multiple levels of learning, had space for

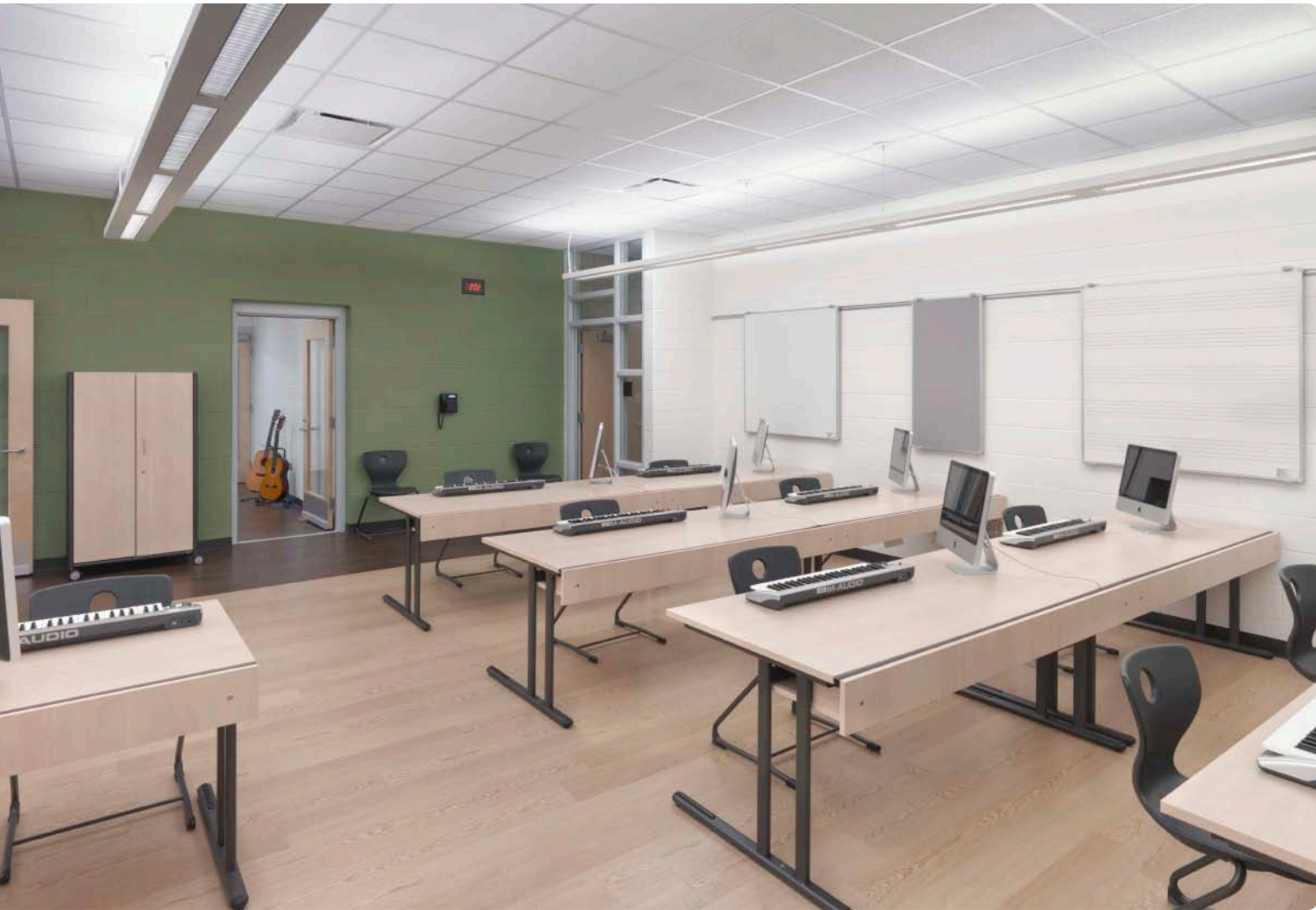
collaborative teaching and planning, and to enjoy where they worked.

The administrators wanted a safe, secure and supportive environment, a welcoming atmosphere for parents and community members, and an efficient, durable and maintainable building.

The community wanted a school that would prepare their children for success in life, a neighborhood

facility they could use and be proud of, and the best use of their tax dollars.

The resulting school achieves all of these things. It is a model for team teaching and activity-based learning. It provides rich connections to the world at large through plentiful windows and reading plazas. It also addresses the students' physical need to move and the teachers' instructional need to break students into flexible groups.



PantoSwing-LuPo | Duo-Media | Series 600

"We knew from prior experience that the adaptable nature of VS furniture was essential to meeting the various needs of the school's fluid new space," says Ms. Yurko. "We also knew that we needed to convince LMS that it was the right choice, so we set up a demonstration classroom that gave students and teachers a chance to experience a VS-enabled environment. The furniture essentially sold itself."

PantoSwing-LuPo and **PantoMove-LuPo** chairs are used throughout the school. The chairs adjust up and down, swivel and roll, letting students change position throughout the day, which is

critical to academic success. Research shows a significant relationship between movement and mental fitness.

"Middle school students don't sit still. They have a natural urge to move," explains Principal Stavrou. "The VS chairs are ergonomic and allow for movement."

To maximize the amount of space for learning activities, Ms. Yurko specified a variety of VS movable tables and storage units throughout the school to provide mobile support for teachers to work with students and each other.

In the primary learning and

study spaces, the teachers wanted furniture that was easy to rearrange and spacious enough for laptops, textbooks and project materials. Ms. Yurko chose **LiteTables**, **EuroLine** and **RondoLift** tables, and **Series 600** storage cupboards.

The **LiteTables** are extraordinarily strong and durable, but so lightweight students can quickly move them together for small group learning activities or stack them up and out of the way for large group events.

The **EuroLine** tables, with their casters bases and diverse shapes, are also easy to rearrange for

different class needs and group projects.

FlipTables allow the health classroom to double as an aerobics/yoga studio. The tables have roomy and easy-to-clean six-foot tops. When floor space is needed for exercise, the tops tilt up via a quick-release mechanism for compact, nested storage.

By utilizing **RondoLift** tables as teachers' desks, Ms. Yurko fulfilled multiple purposes with one piece of furniture: basic sitting-height desk, lectern, and small table for student-teacher interactions. Utilizing a built-in gas spring with release lever, RondoLift tables raise

effortlessly and stop at any point to stand as solidly as a fixed-height table – all without cranks to turn or catch on clothes or pins to pull out and line up.

Series 600 storage cupboards not only house books and supplies, they can also be effortlessly moved around the classrooms to divide the learning studios into multiple smaller spaces when needed, say for different work groups or testing.

Duo-Media computer tables address the special requirements of the school's digital music lab. Technology capable, they have a lockable sliding mechanism for easy access to the cable channel and a cable outlet that runs the full width of the table between top and side panel.

To get the best use of every part of the building, even the hallways were designed as learning environments.

"VS mobile furniture, particularly the **Interactive Center**, has been instrumental to extending learning activities beyond the classroom's four walls to nearly anywhere inside and outside the school," notes Ms. Yurko.

With the new school building came a new identity. The former blue and gold "Lincoln Warriors" became the current silver and green "Lincoln Lightening" with the motto, "Healthy Earth, Body and Mind." Elements such as the garden roof, copper wall panels, vibrant color palette, and warm maple accents all help bring the school's new image to vivid life.

"The color options offered by VS Furniture fit right in with the new motto," says Ms. Yurko. "The green/silver, black/silver and blue/silver colors accentuate the 'healthy

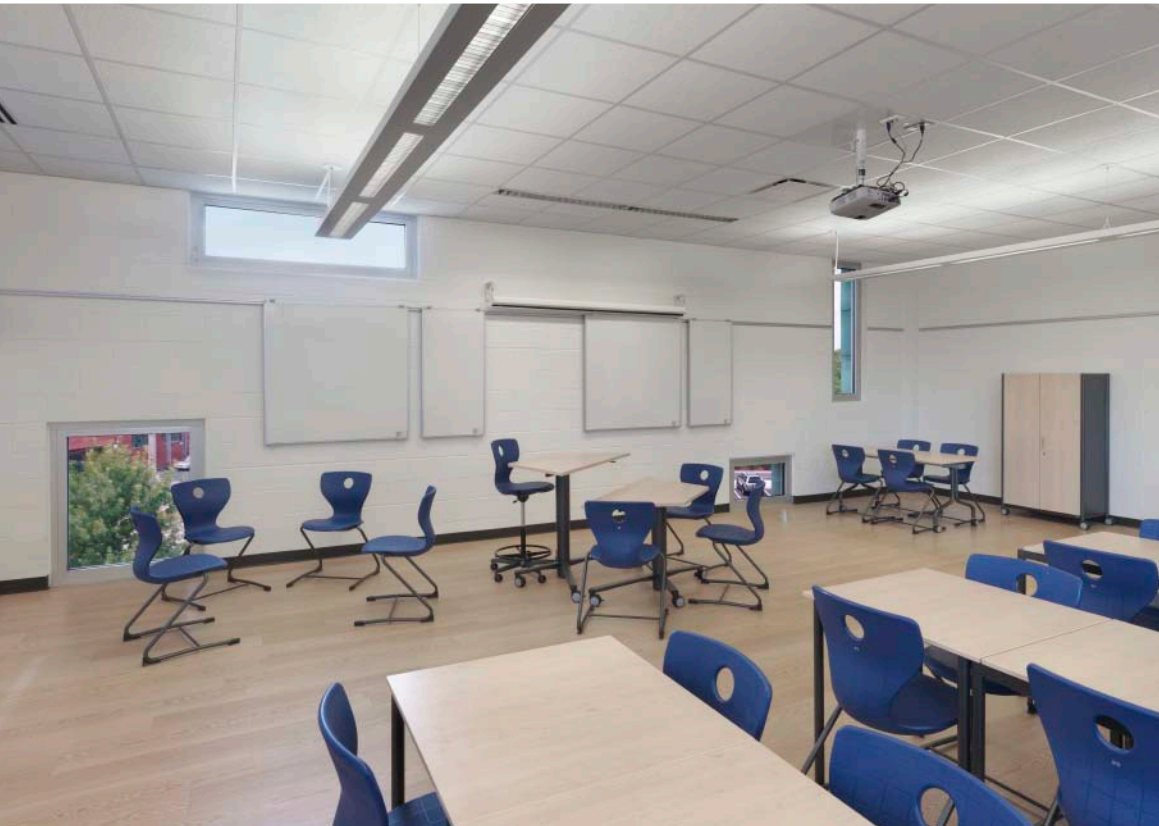


PantoMove-LuPo | PantoMove-LuPo Plus | RondoLift | EuroLine | Series 600





Interactive Center | PantoSwing-LuPo | PantoMove-LuPo Plus | RondoLift | LiteTable | FlipTable-RU | Series 600



earth' idea. They also help with wayfinding because each grade level is identified by a particular color scheme."

LMS has been up and running for a full year and the feedback is universally positive.

Principal Stavrou loves how student-centered everything is.

"This school addresses the needs of the students and the different types of learning they need to succeed," she explains. "It really puts the students first. It shows them that the community, their parents and their teachers care about them and care about their future."

The students can't get enough of it. They describe it as a home away from home, saying things like:

"I feel special here."

"It's not boring furniture. It's fun and different which makes it really cool."

"It's comfortable and there are more options."

And, "It's like a big learning playhouse."

"The entire community is proud of their school and ecstatic that it was delivered under budget," says Ms. Yurko.

Adds Principal Stavrou, "The community really helped in designing the school. When we first opened the doors, they saw the different elements that they suggested and that gave them a profound sense of ownership."

Also of note, LMS was awarded a Citation of Excellence 2011 from Learning by Design, a bi-annual publication for education design and innovation excellence.



PantoSwing-LuPo | PantoMove-LuPo Plus | RondoLift | LiteTable | FlipTable-RU | Series 600



Project Profile:

Lincoln Middle School

Design Team

Educational planning consultant: BrainSpaces Inc.

Architect: STR Partners

Construction Manager: Gilbane Building Company

Objectives

- Promote collaborative teaching and lifelong learning
- Support activity-based curriculum
- Create a lasting source of pride within the community
- Integrate technology and learning
- Use tax dollars wisely

Applications

- Learning studios
- Teacher workrooms
- Conferencing spaces
- Health classroom / Fitness room
- Digital music lab
- Media center
- Reading room

Project Scope

- 98,000 sq. ft.

Products

- PantoSwing-LuPo Chairs
- PantoMove-LuPo Chairs
- PantoMove-LuPo Plus Chairs
- Duo-Media Computer Tables
- EuroLine Tables
- FlipTable-RU Tables
- LiteTable
- RondoLift Tables
- Series 901 Conference Tables
- Series 600 Mobile Cupboard
- Series 600 Mobile Storage Module
- Series 600 Mobile Door Cupboard
- Series 600 Mobile Laptop Module
- Interactive Center

Results

- Comfortable, agile, collaborative learning spaces
- Connections to the outdoors, between students and teachers
- Welcoming atmosphere for parental / community partnerships
- Technology everywhere
- Efficient, durable, maintainable facilities

Year Completed

2010

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