

REAL ESTATE & CONSTRUCTION REVIEW

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Facts & Figures

Owner: Bowling Green Independent Schools, Bowling Green, KY
Type of Project: A new elementary school
Architect: Ross-Tarrant Architects, Inc., Lexington, KY
Construction Manager: Alliance Corporation, Glasgow, KY
Size: 64,500 square feet
Cost: \$7.6 million (construction costs)
Construction Time: April 2004 - June 2005
The Need: A new elementary school to combine two schools with declining enrollment and act as a symbol of renewal
The Challenge: Completing the project in a little more than a year

Supportive Team Members

Holland, Inc.
Excavating Contractor

Lee Masonry Products, Inc.
Masonry Materials Supplier

Structural Design Group
Structural Engineers



Photos courtesy of Moberly Photography, Inc.

Bowling Green, Kentucky

Parker-Bennett-Curry Elementary School

When the new Parker-Bennett-Curry Elementary School was designed, it was intended to be a symbol of renewal. “[The school district] intentionally sent a message to the community,” said Martha R. Tarrant, AIA, president of Ross-Tarrant Architects, Inc., the project’s architect. “[The district] chose the school to be built in the most economically depressed part of town.”

“Our school district had not constructed a new elementary school in

nearly 40 years,” said Joe Tinius, superintendent of Bowling Green Independent Schools, the project’s owner. “We also experienced some declining enrollment, so we decided to combine two elementary schools [into one new school].”

Built on an existing site owned by the school district, the school blends in with the surrounding neighborhood. “This is a fairly poor community with modest income,” said Illona Beresford, designer for Ross-Tarrant. “There were a lot of

single-story red brick houses with small yards and chain-link fences. So we tried to keep the scale of the building down.”

The result is a 64,500-square-foot building that bristles with innovation. “The building isn’t a square box,” said David Butler, vice president for Alliance Corporation, the project’s construction manager. “Each group of grade levels is in pods connected by wings. It has a lot of walls but provides daylight for the classrooms.”



One of the highlights of the school is its media center. "The media center is the hub of the building," Tarrant said. "We wanted it to be accessible for everyone in the school, as well as the parents. It incorporates the library, the periodical room and the media room. [In addition, it] has glass walls so it feels as though it's all one space."

Among the media center's features are a puppet theater with six risers and multiple clocks. "Half our students speak English as a second language, so we have clocks from around the world so students can see what time it is in other countries," Tinius said.

The international theme doesn't stop there — it pervades the entire school. "The gymnasium has nine flags worked into the exterior wall," Beresford said. "They represent the nationalities of the community."

Another aspect of the project's uniqueness was the construction process. "Normally you put in the concrete, then rough in the plumbing and put in the masonry," Butler said. "We eliminated the plumbing and the electric until we had put a roof on the project and got it to dry. The roof allowed us to put in temporary heating units so we could work on the project during the winter."

The team was on a tight timeline for this project, having little more than a year to complete the school. Fortunately, the team encountered no significant problems. "This is probably one of the smoothest projects I've been involved in," Tinius said. "We had a tight timeline — we wanted the teachers to have at least six weeks to get in and prepare for the students. It was a very aggressive timeline, but we were able to meet the goal and the deadline." According to Tinius, Ross-Tarrant and Alliance provided excellent leadership and the project's team members all worked together to ensure the project was completed on time.

According to Beresford, the community was included in the design process and has been encouraged to utilize the school. This has resulted in an enormous amount of pride and ownership in the building. In an area prone to crime, there has not been a single incident of theft or vandalism throughout the project's duration or even after its completion. The area now has an educational facility that reflects the diversity and hope of its community. ■

— Chris Gottschalk



Photos courtesy of Moberly Photography, Inc.