

## BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE THROUGH DESIGN

### JOINT USE PARTNERSHIPS: HIGHS ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

*By HMC Architects, Los Angeles CA*

A trend that has been building momentum in recent years is a joint-use partnership model where high schools are developed on community college campuses. In addition to maximizing space, resources, and facilities, younger students are given an early introduction to their post secondary education possibilities.

Designing a high school on a college campus offers a unique challenge. The process of working with two clients versus one adds a layer of complexity, and often the synergy between two very different organizations that share a common goal can lead to innovative design solutions. What makes these projects distinct is the connection between the high school's facilities and the larger college campus, which are both physical and programmatic.



For more than 20 years, Los Angeles Middle College High School (LAMCHS) operated in portable classrooms on the campus of Los Angeles Southwest College (LASW). Despite its sub par learning environments, the high school continued to produce some of the highest-achieving students in California. Today, as a result of the collaboration between the Los Angeles Community College District, the Los Angeles Unified School District, and Los Angeles Southwest College, education leaders have a new facility under construction. The main goals of the project are to expand the educational opportunities for the local community and provide a direct link to higher education for secondary students, many of whom are from low-income families.

The new high school will share athletic fields and other campus facilities at the college, which will in turn have access to the high school facilities for after-hours and weekend functions. The design creates a building that belongs to the L.A. Southwest College campus while creating a distinct facility for high school students.

Joint-use partnerships promote healthy growth for school districts, colleges, universities, neighborhoods, and communities. There are numerous benefits to students including expanded learning facilities and resources—and in the case of L.A. Southwest Middle College—a leg up on succeeding after high school.



Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) has named LAMCHS the Outstanding Project for new construction of a Campus building. Innovative design strategies, green building techniques, and shared resources are highlights of this unique collaborative project. LAMCHS will occupy a two-story, 54,530-square-foot building on the LASW college campus. It will occupy a prominent location on the campus and will share existing campus amenities with the college, including

outdoor playfields, athletic facilities, and lecture spaces. The design will achieve LEED Gold certification and realize energy performance that exceeds California Title 24 by 41 percent through the use of onsite renewable energies, storm water treatment, and natural daylight harvesting. The facility itself is designed as a teaching tool and will educate students through the use of a Photovoltaic (PV) demonstration, a school garden, and informational kiosks that register and display building performance.

The announcement of the LEED Gold Status even caught the attention of one of the LAMCHS graduates. Iann Williams writes, *“I am a 1998 alum of MCHS Southwest College, Class of 1998, and I am so excited to see the new building on campus! Thank you for designing this awesome sustainable building for new students, teachers and staff to learn and teach with the state of the art educational facility. I am also very pleased to read about the new construction in the American School Board Journal, Spring 2011 edition that the MCHS building will achieve LEED Gold status through day-light harvesting and will also teach students about energy use and building performance in addition to having a community garden! MCHS has definitely fought hard to make this project happen and I am very pleased to see that one day my children will be able to attend this special school that provided me with the skills and opportunities to matriculate through post secondary education.”*