

## High Performance Facility Analysis

2/19/15

### Facility: **Pacific High School**

Pacific High School is the alternative high school for students in the Sitka School District, and serves youth aged 14-21 who are at risk of dropping out of school. While 30-40 students attend Pacific High School at any given time, about 50 total youth are served per year, due to high transiency rates. Students who attend Pacific High School typically experience multiple risk factors, including poverty, homelessness, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, family instability, mental illness, academic underachievement, and chronic health problems. Specifically, 89% of students who attend Pacific High School are eligible for free/reduced lunch, 50% are homeless, 62% are not proficient on the statewide assessments, 20% are pregnant or parenting teenagers, and 10% are under formal court-ordered supervision by the State of Alaska Department of Juvenile Justice. Pacific High School also serves a proportionally high number of students of Alaska Native heritage; the population of students with Alaska Native heritage in the Sitka School District is 25%, whereas the student population at Pacific High School is about 60%. Classes at Pacific High School run in 6-week segments with morning and afternoon options. Fridays are dedicated to interest-based explorations that often involve community volunteers (e.g., creative writing class offered by a local published author).

Pacific High School has been in existence for a number of decades. Initially it was a joint venture between the Sitka School District and the University of Alaska Southeast's Sitka campus in that the students counted as being enrolled with the school district; however, the staff were employees of the university, and the university was paid by the district on a contract basis to offer the schooling option. About 15 years ago Pacific High School became fully embraced as an alternative school within the Sitka School District. Pacific High School occupies a space that started as the original elementary school in Sitka but morphed into many other uses over the many years. It was in need of significant repair, and recently went through a \$2 million renovation that found not even the foundation was stable in the previous structure. The renovation was a capitol project from the state, and the Sitka voters passed the bond with nearly 70% of the population voting in favor of renovating the building for Pacific High School.

The Pacific High School remodel was a project initiated by students at the school who lobbied the state and local community. Students and staff were involved in the design process at every level. Pacific High School moved into their newly renovated building in February of 2014, and since that time won an architectural design award for educational spaces. Pacific High School is located across the street from a marina and popular walking parkway, next to the historic Russian Bishop's House, and 1-block from a main downtown intersection.

Phil Burdick, Co-Principal talked to local media after the City Assembly voted to approve the remodel: "It's going to change everything. It's going to change the way we're able to deliver, it's going to change the way students feel about the education they get, it's going to change the way the community feels about the education we're giving, it's going to change the way 500,000 visitors a year view Sitka and how we treat education. You guys, this is going to be an amazing thing for the community."

Strengths	Challenges
<p><b>Learning spaces with daylighting, flexible furniture, and room for group projects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The building consists of three classrooms with two that have glass modular walls that open up to embrace a group meeting area, which creates one room that is about 40% of the overall space of the building.</li> <li>• Two of the classrooms have an amazing view of the harbor and landscape, and both of those classrooms have a wall of windows with a door to the outside. The third classroom does not have the same view but does have ample natural light through the installation of light tubes into the ceiling.</li> <li>• Rooms are of a good size and allow for the easy movement of furniture, and chairs are durable but stackable. Built-in cupboards are numerous and exist along one wall in each classroom so as not to limit the use of floor space in the rooms.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community-use facilities such as meeting rooms and exercise rooms</b></p> <p>Due to the need to keep the footprint of the remodel at the same size as the previous building, there is not adequate space for rooms focused on providing a resource to the community. For example, there is no gym facility at Pacific High School; students access the local community gym that is situated about 3 blocks away from the school.</p>
<p><b>Use of atriums and learning streets to promote social interaction (instead of corridors/hallways)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The entry and center of the school is an oval-shaped space with a large skylight. The school office is connected to this meeting space by a large opening in the wall that is secured during non-school hours. Part of the oval has a ledge with computers for students to use as needed, and the walls above the ledge are designed to post notices and student work.</li> <li>• The entire student body and all staff meet every day before lunch in the atrium for an All School Meeting, where kudos are presented and information is shared. Students pull up mobile stools that are naturally stored in the space, and also use a couch in the atrium.</li> <li>• All three classrooms open to the Atrium.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Workrooms for staff that encourage collaboration</b></p> <p>There is a room with flexible walls that can be used for staff or small group meetings, there is a room under the stairs where teaching supplies are kept and teachers have a small space to support the creation of resources that will be used in the classroom, and there is a small narrow space adjacent to the office with a laptop ledge where two people could work side by side on a project with minimal interruption; however, there is simply not adequate space for staff to collaborate in a location other than a room designed for another purpose (e.g., classroom, meeting space, confidential space adjacent to office).</p>
<p><b>Project rooms for creative thinking/inventing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The meeting space is light-filled and hosts a large table that people sit around to have conversations with eye-contact. The table is big enough to have 2-3 smaller groups holding conversations around the corners of the table.</li> <li>• The small confidential office off the main office allows multiple people to work along-side each other without distractions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Quiet areas</b></p> <p>There is no space for students to sit and be, as people are everywhere around the building. There is no library in the school, and other than the confidential office space off the main office, virtually every space at Pacific High School is humming with activity at all times.</p>

Strengths	Challenges
<p><b>Areas for multiage groups that mix students of similar interests and aptitudes</b></p> <p>All of Pacific High School is multi-age, so all areas are designed to support this aspect.</p>	
<p><b>Use of outside facilities within the community</b></p> <p>Because of the limited footprint available for the school, design decisions had to be made that maximized the space inside the school to support student learning and create a community feeling within the school building. Needs not met within the footprint of the school include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Kitchen:</b> Pacific High School’s kitchen is located in a district building adjacent to the school. Students and staff cook healthy meals daily in their kitchen, and students eat in the building where the food is prepared.</li> <li>○ <b>Gym:</b> Pacific High School students get passes to use a community gym facility that is located about 3-blocks from the school. PE classes are held in the community gym on Fridays, and students are able to use the gym at other times they would like throughout the week via their gym pass.</li> <li>○ <b>Library:</b> The City Library is used extensively, which is 2-blocks from the school, and the school has access to a laptop for every student, so students also use online library resources as needed.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>A variety of technology to include distance learning, online classes, wireless networks, etc.</b></p> <p>The school building has a robust wireless network, there is an adequate number of laptops for each student to have one, and each classroom has an interactive whiteboard and a document camera. Students take online courses as needed mostly for credit recovery.</p>	
<p><b>Adaptable classrooms that can be reconfigured as instructional strategies and tech change</b></p> <p>Each of the classrooms is a large space with an open floor plan, which allows for reconfiguration as needed throughout the day and the years. Two of the classrooms have glass modular walls that open to each other through a group meeting space, which offers even more options for configurations.</p>	