

Spring 2024

The Power of Multilingual Voices

*Engaging
Communities to
Create Inclusive
Spaces*



School news.

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FOR
GOOD**
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The Power of Multilingual Voices

3

By Sherry Sajadpour and Brian Meyers



New Culinary and Medical CTE Spaces in Chico Driving High Student Demand

6

By Tim DeWitt



HMC Architects Introduces Enhanced Material Selection Process

10

By Jennifer Wehling



Meet HMC Architects' Director of Interior Design Sergio Lechuga

13

Q&A

Designing Futures Foundation
Project Milestones
Rankings

16
18
20

The Power of Multilingual Voices

Engaging Communities to Create Inclusive Spaces



PHOTO BY JUSTIN PANSON

California students and their families are navigating many issues – housing and food insecurity, immigration needs, and income inequality – and schools today are more than just spaces for learning; they are a vital community resource. With such a diversity of experiences and thoughts, it is important that we, as designers, listen to the voices of everyone in the community. Reaching out to the community is key to designing welcoming and inclusive schools. Everyone has a voice, and here at HMC, we're committed to continually enhancing our listening practices. Recently, we conducted unique multilingual community

workshops to connect with two northern California communities, San Benito High School District's (SBHSD) Hollister High School in Hollister, California, and Sacramento City Unified School District's Nicholas Elementary School in Sacramento, California.

HOLLISTER HIGH SCHOOL #2

Forty miles south of California's Silicon Valley, SBHSD serves over 3,000 students. HMC has been asked to assist in the programming, planning, and design of the district's second high school. The new school aims to relieve overcrowding at the existing high school, which is the tenth-largest school by population in the state.

By Sherry Sajadpour

AIA, ALEP

& Brian Meyers

LEED AP, BD+C



Sherry is an experienced senior PreK-12 architect, planner, and mentor who brings over 20 years of educational design expertise and unique skillsets. As an accredited learning environment planner (ALEP), Sherry is dedicated to maintaining transparent and effective communication with all stakeholders.

As HMC's Pre-K-12 practice leader, **Brian** is responsible for the strategic planning, direction, and management of the firm's PreK-12 practice. He has over 20 years of experience spanning all aspects of educational planning and design.

PHOTO: HMC Principal in Charge Sherry Sajadpour working with school families in a community meeting for the new high school in Hollister, CA.

“The language of architecture and school design is universal. Hosting a Spanish-language event allowed us to listen and learn, and I’m certain the outcomes will be better for it.”

– Brian Meyers

PHOTO BY JOHN PARK



Nearly five hundred Hollister High School students are members of migrant and seasonal farm-working families supported by California’s Migrant Education Program (MEP). The MEP is a federal program that provides supplementary educational and support services to migrant children whose families move frequently across school districts or states for agricultural work. The program aims to help reduce educational disruptions and other challenges. Hollister High School’s students regularly travel from their homes in the district to farms throughout California and Arizona to help harvest the food that feeds us, and many students and their families speak Spanish as their primary language.

To engage the community in the design of the new school, SBHSD hosted a series of town halls as we began the design process. One was conducted in English and the other entirely in Spanish, which allowed for more active participation, engagement, and seamless sharing of everyone’s insights into the community’s desires and needs. More than 100 people attended the Spanish language event, where we discussed potential campus configurations. A presentation was given in Spanish, followed by group activities facilitated by one of our HMC team members and a translator at each table. Activities included 3D building block puzzles and blank slate brainstorming.

“Schools are community hubs, so getting their support for their new school communities is essential.”

The district’s Migrant Education Program Specialist, Liliana Ruiz, invited families from her program to participate. Families appreciated that their voices and opinions were valued and were happy to have a say in the design of the new high school. For the parents who don’t typically speak up in larger settings, small group discussions allowed them a space to participate and their opinions provided the design team with invaluable insights and input.

The district received over 1,300 comments about the new high school through the bilingual engagement process. This will help the design team tailor our designs to meet the community’s needs effectively while reflecting their broader aspirations. As designers, we must hold ourselves accountable and be transparent with how community feedback is integrated into the design process. So, to ensure responsiveness to their feedback, a series of design strategies were established, and we used simple graphics to illustrate the framework clearly. This served as both a guide for the design process and allowed us to visually and tangibly connect the design decisions with the community’s input and the district’s core goals. This unique approach reflects a diverse range of ideas and perspectives and created a roadmap for all our design decisions so that the resulting master plan not only meets the functional requirements of the school but also embodies the community’s vision.

NICHOLAS ELEMENTARY

Sacramento City Unified School District’s Nicholas Elementary School in Sacramento, California, will deliver a long-overdue resource to the students of this historically disadvantaged community. As one of the largest school districts in California, SCUSD has made equity a critical lens through which they are assigning the \$750 million from their 2020 Measure H bond. Designing

Nicholas as a “Community School” has been one of the overarching goals of this project, which is to create a hub for the families of this south Sacramento neighborhood. Beyond designing spaces for learning, the school will also feature a 1,200-1,600 SF space dedicated to the community, providing medical, dental, and legal services.

Nicholas Elementary School students speak various languages, including Spanish, Vietnamese, Hmong, Farsi, Urdu, and Mandarin. We led another multilingual community forum to reach these students and their families. While the presentation was in English, interpreters utilized real-time interpretation headsets, ensuring everyone could understand and participate in the conversation.

At the community meeting, young students and their parents asked good questions of the design team and district officials. Community members voted on exterior color schemes for the campus and playground equipment options. A showstopper moment was when a second-grade girl delivered an especially posed set of remarks to the gathering.

Schools are community hubs, so getting their support for their new school communities is essential. It is paramount to include the community as much as possible to understand the district’s, students’, and teachers’ vision for the school. As a majority-minority company, HMC believes you cannot design for the human experience if you cannot be human. We celebrate the diversity that makes our firm great and work to use our diversity to better engage with our communities, like we have in San Benito County and South Sacramento. ●

New Culinary and Medical CTE Spaces in Chico Driving High Student Demand

Pleasant Valley High School Programs Provide Direct Routes to Paychecks and Careers

By Tim DeWitt

Principal in Charge



*With a 30-year career in K-14 design, **Tim** has overseen numerous successful educational projects, prioritizing client needs and collaborative problem-solving. A steward of clients' vision and goals, he delivers inspiring learning environments while meeting program and budget objectives.*

The culinary arts kitchen at Pleasant Valley High School (PVHS) is buzzing with activity as students in chef's jackets hand-mix chocolate cake batter in large bowls and carefully fill baking pans. There are eight stainless steel workstations, each with a commercial-grade stove/oven and exhaust hood, plus a prep area with a sink. In front of this array of student stations is a teaching station equipped with cameras linked to large screens for demonstrations. On other days, you might see students preparing various dishes across various cuisines, including searing craft pizzas in the large traditional masonry oven. Adjacent to the kitchen area is a front-of-the-house restaurant/bistro space opening onto an exterior patio that can host student-run catering events.

SECURING KEY CTE GRANTS

This gleaming and well-utilized kitchen facility is the culmination of a process initiated many years ago by PVHS CTE coordinator Priscilla Burns, who is nearing retirement after a 41-year career as a career tech instructor, 28 of those years running the programs at PVHS. She sketches the program's history, "The original space was only six little home-kitchen stations, but our vision was always that we needed more capacity and commercial equipment. Our original grant writing efforts weren't getting results. We kept running into stumbling blocks and not qualifying for various technical reasons.

When I stepped into the role of Chico's CTE coordinator, I think it put me in a better position to see the big picture of what we were doing right and the need to dig deeper

to connect with labor markets, which is vital in writing CTE facility grants. We put together a great team of people and focused on critical questions: What do the kids need? What does the staff need? What do our industry partners in the area need? What does the space look like? What equipment? What type of workflow?"

That preliminary work paid off as the PV team secured several key grants¹ from various sources—and that funding enabled several major CTE facilities projects on campus that were completed in 2022: a new building housing the culinary arts lab connected with a large multipurpose space, the relocation and modernization of medical CTE lab spaces for clinical and sports medicine pathways, a central outdoor student commons, the courtyard off the culinary lab, and a reimagined front entry to campus. The project involved 11 labs and eight classrooms across eight buildings, covering 40,000 SF, at a final cost of just over \$17 million.

HMC Architect's project architect Riley Peck explains, "When we evaluated the existing site and program goals, we developed a plan that included relocating the administration to an existing building near the front of campus and another relocation dictated by the logic of putting programs in the right places. The site reorganization allowed us to add the student commons as a centerpiece to campus. This work represents a significant re-imagining of the campus core. In terms of the style of the new building, we intentionally complimented the style of an existing classroom building built around 2015—this set a new, more contemporary style that will carry forward into future campus projects."

PHOTO: Culinary Arts students prepare a pizza at one of the new workstations.

PHOTO BY DAVID FENNELA



A RIGOROUS, REAL-WORLD PATHWAY

Turning back to the culinary program, Priscilla Burns adds some detail about the rigor of the Food Service and Hospitality Pathway and the key connections she has forged with local industry: “We teach them how to do everything from entrees to wedding cake to learning to sauté, learning to bake and work with different pieces of equipment, mixers or speed racks. We also offer students in their junior and senior years the opportunity to do internships. I have students who have worked through the unpaid internship contract and are now on the payroll.”

“Local food service employers see and understand my kids’ skill set and that they’re already trained in food safety and knife skills. The kids know how to run all the building equipment, making them more valuable. A lot of our business partners call me for employees. They’ll visit the school and then offer kids jobs.”

“Some kids are passionate about this industry and use this training as a career ladder toward executive chef positions. Others are more focused on getting a job soon. On that side of the equation, we call it “passion to paychecks.”

The culinary program has only grown in popularity, with 300 students at any time across the different instructional levels. Burns adds, “We hired another staff person last year because enrollment blew up.

Kids love culinary! We have kids who show up during their free periods and want to be involved. They’ll ask, ‘Do you want me to reorganize the walk-in?’ They’re taking ownership—from an engagement standpoint, it’s beautiful!”

Foodservice/Hospitality is one of 11 pathways at PVHS, driven by the Chico Unified School District’s commitment to “Engage every student in high-quality, rigorous, and relevant educational pathways and programs.” Because of Chico’s proximity to the north state’s abundant agricultural lands, the Agriculture program and Welding/Manufacturing are quite popular.

MODERNIZED MEDICAL CTE BUILDING

As part of the CTE facilities project, the medical pathway is now housed in a modernized building adjacent to the student commons. Lab and classroom spaces support instruction in clinical patient care and sports medicine. In addition to the primary educational purpose, these spaces are also utilized by PV sports teams and occasionally for training by community organizations.

CTE instructor Melanie Castillo explained that she worked with the nursing program at nearby Butte College to help plan this space, and she listed the equipment required for this equipment-intensive pathway. “We have patient monitors, eight mannequins, two of which are

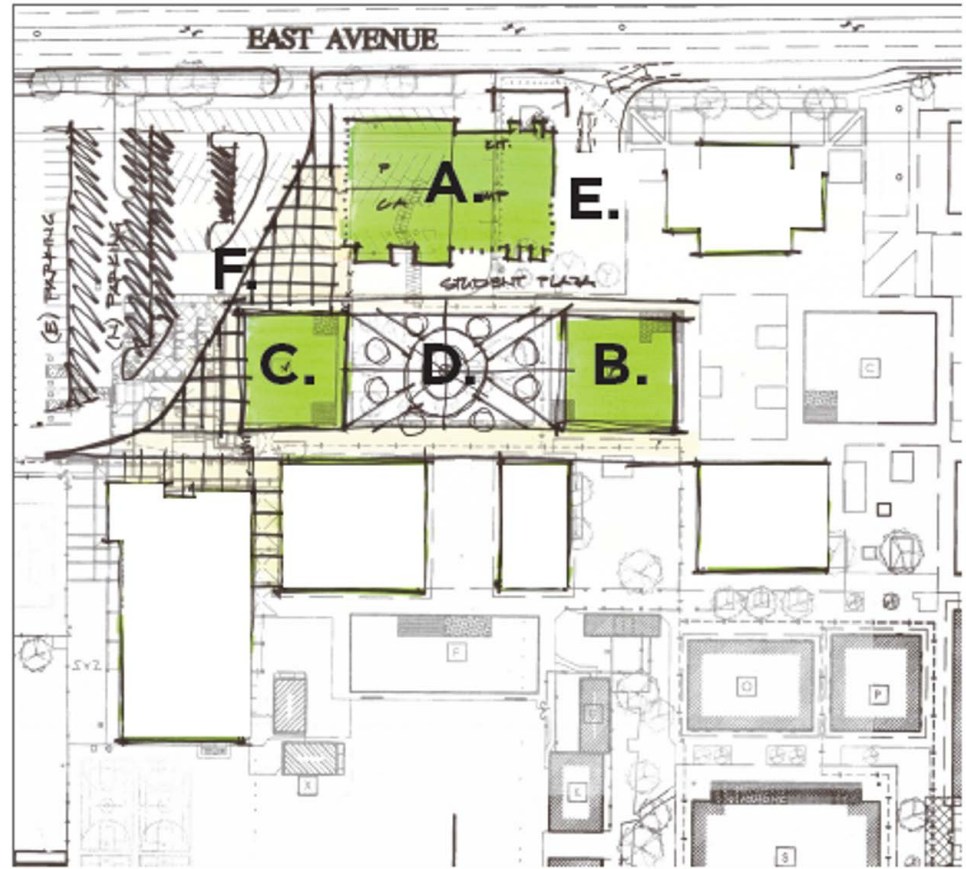
“We teach them how to do everything from entrees to wedding cake to learning to sauté...We also offer students in their junior and senior years the opportunity to do internships.”

– Priscilla Burns,
PVHS CTE coordinator

“It’s very involved, and it’s a hands-on experience, but this program granted me the opportunity to work on my real-world and professional skills, and I know that will take me further than I can imagine!”

— Jessica, Hospitality & Food Service Student

Site Map



A. New Culinary Arts CTE / Multipurpose
B. Medical CTE (relocated and modernized)
C. Administration (relocated and modernized)

D. New Student Commons
E. New Culinary Patio
F. New Campus Frontage

robotic, computer stations, eight state-of-the-art hospital beds, treatment tables, walkers, wheelchairs, backboards, and an anatomic table.” This 3D digital visualization of the human body’s internal systems allows students to perform virtual dissection as part of anatomy and physiology education.

About two-thirds of the medical pathway students are destined for four-year nursing programs, and a much smaller percentage want to be doctors. Castillo says the programs help some students obtain medical and physical therapy assistant positions directly from high school. She sums up CTE education: “We don’t necessarily think like an English teacher or history teacher. We think of our classrooms as a place of business; we want kids to be ready for whatever they do in life. We try to get working professionals to come back and be teachers. The kids need to see

a different way of learning and thinking for how to be successful not only in a job but also in high school and college and beyond.”

A few years after the completion of this project, I have to close with a personal observation: Collaborating with Priscilla, Melanie, and the PV team to bring the vision of world-class education to life was a genuine delight. Their determination to surpass limitations transformed the classrooms and labs. With the infusion of grant funding, Priscilla elevated her teaching environment to such heights that several equipment suppliers commented that PV is the ultimate setting for nurturing the next generation of chefs. This is the power of dedication and innovation in creating extraordinary facilities! ●

1. CTE Facilities Grants - CDE

Career and Technical Education Incentive Grant

Perkins Federal Funds

Strong Workforce Grants

FCCLA Incentive and ASB Student Run Enterprise

“They’re taking
ownership

—from an engagement
standpoint, it’s beautiful!”

— Priscilla Burns,
PVHS CTE coordinator



HMC Architects Introduces Enhanced Material Selection Process

Celebrating Earth Week 2024 with Sustainable Material Choices

By Jennifer Wehling

AIA, LEED AP BD+C,
ID+C, WELL AP



*A licensed architect with over 20 years of experience, **Jennifer** leads strategic initiatives for sustainable design at HMC and strives to deliver our clients the most sustainable projects possible without negatively impacting the budget, scope, and schedule.*

In April, HMC Architects unveiled a significant advancement in our commitment to sustainability and responsible material choices. To support our commitment to the [AIA Materials Pledge](#), we have recently implemented two new tools to streamline communication, enhance collaboration, and prioritize environmentally conscious decisions in our projects.

As a purpose-driven firm, HMC's Design for Good ethos is evident in our portfolio, people, and design process. We are committed to sustainability and wellness and proudly endorse the AIA Materials Pledge. This pledge underscores our commitment to making responsible material choices and aligning our practices with sustainability and health-conscious principles.

The first tool is a new Materials Intake Form. A significant milestone in our journey toward a sustainable future, this user-friendly platform provides a centralized hub for vendors and manufacturers to submit and update material information seamlessly. This centralized hub becomes the go-to resource for our architects and designers as they choose responsible materials to support project goals.

The second tool is a new Finish Schedule Template. The information in this new template won't look much different on the drawings. Still, internally, it allows teams to track the AIA Materials Pledge categories, leading to a more purposeful selection of products supporting HMC's sustainability and individual project goals.

As designers of the built environment, we understand the implications of our decisions on human health, environmental health, social health and equity, climate health, and circularity. These powerhouse tools allow our teams to make more informed decisions, track those decisions, and use that data to inform an even better process in the future. Here's why it matters:

Efficiency: The streamlined process gives our teams access to the resources they need to make informed decisions quickly and a direct line of contact to material reps when they have questions.

Accuracy and Relevance: With the most up-to-date information available, material selections will be based not only on cost, performance, aesthetics but also on their ability to support overall human and environmental health.

Transparency and Accessibility: This process promotes transparency and accessibility, fostering better collaboration and understanding among all stakeholders involved in our projects. We can collectively create beautiful, functional, healthy, and environmentally responsible spaces through open communication.

These new tools are particularly relevant for PreK-12 school districts and their sustainability goals. As students engage with their learning environments, they deserve spaces that inspire creativity and innovation and reflect our collective commitment to restoring a healthy environment where future generations can thrive. ●

AIA Materials Pledge





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for
good.

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Q+A

Meet HMC Architects’ Director of Interior Design Sergio Lechuga

Sergio Lechuga, CID, joined HMC Architects in 2006 and leads the firm’s interior design practice. With more than 16 years in project management and design, Sergio is dedicated to designing PreK-12 interiors that seamlessly blend pragmatism and functionality with a deep sense of context and evocation of the school district’s values and the community it serves.

Q How does interior design create a positive and conducive learning environment in schools?

A The impact of space on our emotions and well-being is profound; it can evoke happiness, stress, or lethargy. Research indicates that access to daylight correlates with improved academic performance, increased attendance rates, and reduced behavioral issues. Selecting materials that promote indoor air quality by minimizing toxic emissions and providing adequate ventilation can contribute to a healthier learning environment, alleviating allergies and asthma symptoms among students.

Ensuring that classrooms and other learning areas are acoustically optimized is essential for maintaining focus and facilitating clear communication. The design of interior environments plays a pivotal role in shaping students’ experiences and ultimately impacts their academic success. Prioritizing lighting, healthy materials, ventilation, and acoustics is crucial in creating educational spaces that foster positive learning outcomes.

Q How does interior design influence the perception of a school’s quality and reputation within the community, and how can this be leveraged to address challenges like declining enrollment?

A The condition of an environment significantly influences people’s perceptions and attitudes toward it. A poorly maintained or unclean environment can inadvertently dampen enthusiasm and impact the overall experience within a school setting. Although a school’s physical appearance should not be the sole indicator of its academic success, it undeniably affects the morale of students, parents, and staff.

Individuals naturally gravitate towards educational institutions they can take pride in, where they feel welcomed and inspired. Especially with declining school enrollment, parents are becoming increasingly discerning about where they entrust their children’s education. Modern, well-maintained facilities attract talented students and garner support from the community and potential sponsors.

While extensive modernization may only sometimes be feasible for some districts due to financial constraints, even minor improvements can make a significant difference. Simple measures such as regular cleaning, addressing worn flooring, and applying fresh coats of paint can breathe new life into school facilities, fostering a sense of pride and belonging within the community. Districts can cultivate a positive atmosphere that encourages learning and community engagement by prioritizing the upkeep and enhancement of school environments.

“The impact of space on our emotions and well-being is profound; it can evoke happiness, stress, or lethargy.”

“When it comes to creating optimal learning environments, the health and safety of students are paramount.”

Q *Considering limited budgets, what cost-effective interior design strategies do you recommend for schools to enhance their learning environments and adapt to changing student demographics?*

A When it comes to creating optimal learning environments, the health and safety of students are paramount. Prioritizing the maintenance of these spaces is crucial as a foundational step. Upgrading lighting systems to enhance quality and balance and reduce glare can significantly improve the overall atmosphere of the facilities.

Another critical aspect of modernizing educational spaces is adapting to students' diverse needs and learning styles by introducing more comfortable, flexible, and movable furniture. This approach ensures that learning spaces are dynamic and adaptable to accommodate various teaching methods and student preferences, ultimately enhancing the learning experience.

Q How can interior design principles optimize existing spaces within aging schools, making them more functional, aesthetically pleasing, and adaptable to evolving educational needs?

A Historically, schools often adhered to a rigid “teacher-centered” model, characterized by a prominent teaching wall at the front of the classroom and fixed casework along the perimeter. Transitioning from this traditional setup towards more flexible, collaborative furniture can revitalize classroom environments.

By embracing a more contemporary approach, educators can design diverse learning zones tailored to different teaching methodologies and student preferences. These zones may include areas for project-based work, focused learning, and self-guided study, each equipped with varying furniture and teaching mediums to facilitate engagement and collaboration.

Modernizing ambient lighting and applying fresh coats of paint can significantly rejuvenate aging school buildings, enhancing the overall ambiance and creating a more welcoming and inspiring learning environment.

Q How do you prioritize design elements and features when working with schools facing budget constraints, ensuring that limited resources are allocated effectively to maximize impact?

A We prioritize design elements according to the client's objectives, maximizing value within the constraints. Given schools' typically limited budgets, it is essential to be resourceful in allocating funds wisely. We value engineer as necessary; we utilize cost-efficient materials, streamline design complexities, and devise creative and economical strategies to achieve the desired design outcomes. By doing so, we empower clients to optimize their budgetary resources, ensuring that every dollar spent delivers the most significant possible impact.

Q How do you integrate technology infrastructure and modern amenities into school interiors while balancing functionality, aesthetics, and budget considerations?

A When dealing with aging school buildings, unforeseen challenges during demolition can lead to significant cost escalations. To mitigate such risks, we strive to minimize the scope of work to essential areas requiring new infrastructure integration. Having experienced consultants and engineers who can think creatively becomes paramount, mainly when operating within tight budgets.

Effective coordination between interior design and new infrastructure is crucial in minimizing the visibility of unsightly elements such as exposed conduits or mechanical ducts. Even when faced with such challenges, we can turn them into student learning opportunities. By highlighting these elements, we can use them to teach students about their school environment's architectural and design features.



PHOTO: Sergio Lechuga engaged with clients in a design meeting.

PHOTO BY DAVID FENNEMA

Q What collaborative approaches do you recommend for involving stakeholders, including educators, administrators, students, and community members, in the interior design process to ensure that designs reflect their needs and aspirations for the learning environment?

A Involving students, educators, and parents is paramount in the design process. This ensures that all stakeholders have a voice and are engaged at every stage. Designers must adopt a curious mindset and take the time to understand the community they serve. This involves actively listening, observing, and asking pertinent questions to identify pain points, goals, and aspirations.

Designers must conduct thorough research to tailor their designs to meet the community's specific needs. Site visits, demographic research, and participation in community events are valuable methods for gaining insight into users' perspectives and preferences.

Continuous engagement with students, educators, administrators, and the wider community is vital to ensure design solutions align with their expectations. A collaborative approach that prioritizes stakeholder engagement facilitates the development of responsive, inclusive designs that reflect the community's values and aspirations. ●

Supporting STEM Education with DIY Girls Grant

By Adrienne Luce



Adrienne is a social impact leader who has spent more than 20 years transforming lives and strengthening communities through the power of philanthropy. As the executive director of HMC's Designing Futures Foundation (DFF), she is committed to building a better world by investing in disadvantaged people and communities of color.

As part of the HMC Designing Futures Foundation's (DFF) commitment to expanding access to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education, the DFF recently awarded a \$5,000 grant to DIY (Do-It-Yourself) Girls to support an intensive yearlong "Invent Girls" program at LAUSD's Sylmar High School.

DIY Girls' mission is to increase girls' and gender-expansive youth's interest in and long-term success in technology, engineering, and making through innovative educational experiences and mentor relationships. The organization develops and implements educational programs designed to encourage engagement with technology, promote self-confidence, and support aspirations to technical careers. DIY Girls provides a supportive community for youth driven by an interest in creating and building with technology.

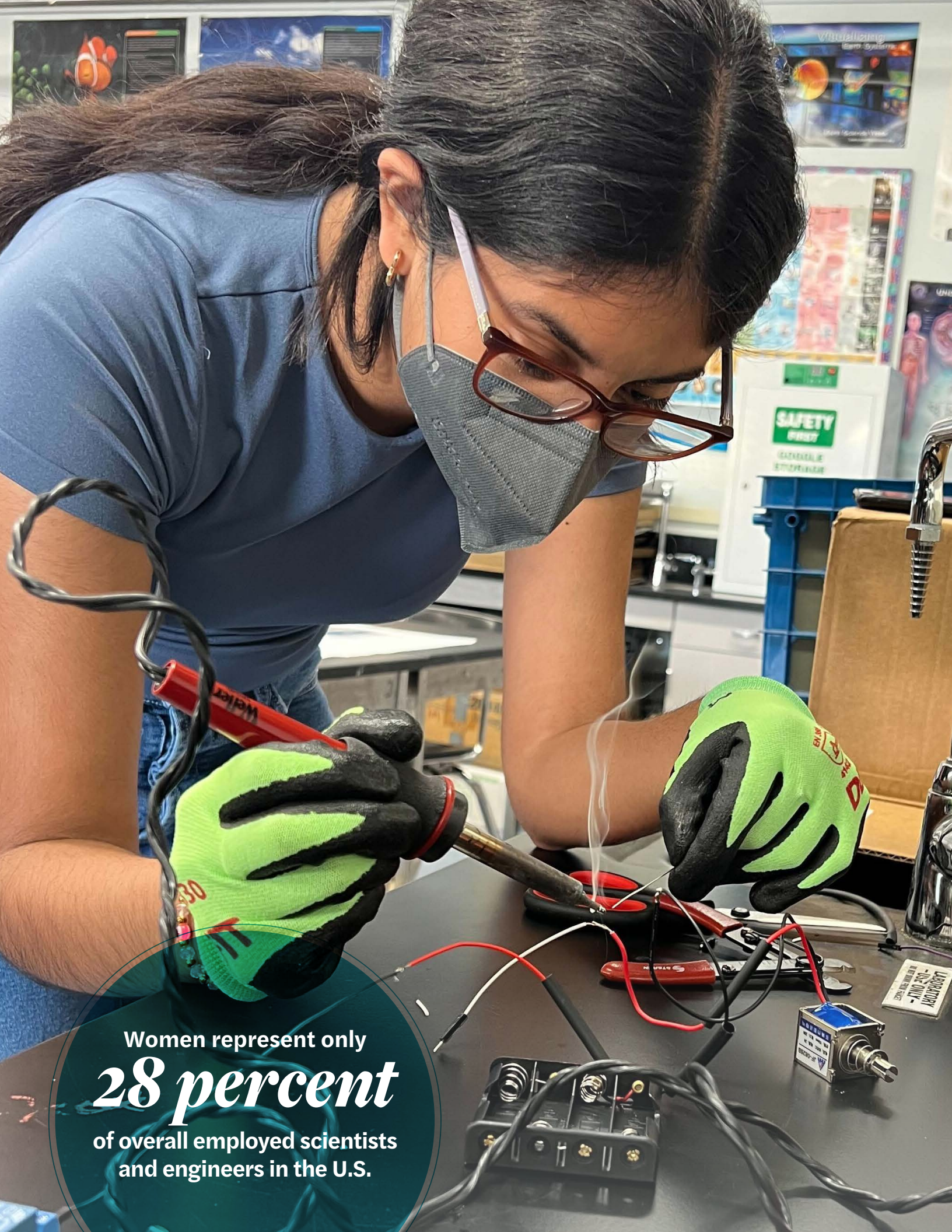
DIY Girls' programs are designed to help address the problem of underrepresentation of women in STEM, which in turn acts as an essential form of economic mobility that provides a direct path to personal growth and long-term prosperity for girls and women who pursue careers in these fields. As tech products have become ubiquitous (whether the apps in our smartphones, the systems in self-driving cars, or the programs making advances in healthcare) and well-paying

careers in STEM fields have multiplied, women—especially women of color—have not benefited equitably from this exponential growth. Women represent only 28 percent of overall employed scientists and engineers in the U.S., and just five percent are women of color. This inequality begins early in the education pipeline, and the most significant disparities are among women of color. Nationally, only 15 percent of girls between fourth and eighth grade demonstrate, or even express, an interest in STEM. According to the "Closing the STEM Gap" study¹, girls lose interest in STEM and computer science as they reach higher instructional levels. For example, in middle school, 31 percent of girls believe that jobs requiring coding and programming are "not for them." In high school, that percentage jumps up to 40 percent. By the time they are in college, 58 percent of girls count themselves out of these jobs. This decision significantly affects their career options and earning power.

There is a significant opportunity to right the imbalance among STEM professionals and students. The U.S. expects to have 3.5 million vacancies in STEM jobs by 2025, and demand for workers is expected to grow faster than the overall labor market. And we know when to seize that opportunity—early before the inequality begins. ●

For more information or to support DIY Girls, please visit www.diygirls.org

1. Microsoft By Dr. Shalini Kesar, Southern Utah University



Women represent only
28 percent
of overall employed scientists
and engineers in the U.S.

Project Milestones

Thomas Edison Elementary School Breaks Ground On New Research and Innovation Center

The Anaheim Elementary School District held a groundbreaking ceremony to celebrate the start of construction on Thomas Edison Elementary School's new Research and Innovation Center (RIC) in Anaheim, California. The HMC design team, local dignitaries, trade partners, district representatives, and faculty attended the event to mark the beginning of the new 7,645 SF project.

The district and Thomas Edison Elementary School set out to create a multi-functioning facility that will replace the existing library building, accommodate a variety of activities, and serve as an inviting community center for the neighborhood. The design prioritizes efficiency, safety, and accessibility, with precise entries and pathways, and is designed for community, change, clarity, and well-being. We collaborated with diverse stakeholders throughout the design process to ensure a solid connection to the adjoining neighborhood. The Research and Innovation Center accommodates multiple teaching and learning modalities, with easily identifiable entrances and a layout that promotes easy monitoring.

The new building will accommodate roughly 100 students between the four main classroom spaces — two classrooms, an innovation lab, and a research and innovation center. The result is an inclusive environment that is welcoming for all

and connects occupants with outdoor spaces. Large sliding glass doors allow connections between interior spaces and exterior plaza. Covered exterior canopies adjacent to the classrooms enable indoor/outdoor teaching and learning opportunities. The RIC's flexible furniture and layout invite students to engage in collaborative learning or individual study. Nestled within the bookshelves, a cozy reading nook offers students a tranquil space for personal study or respite. Substantial completion is scheduled for November 2024. ●





Santa Clara Unified School District Celebrates New Laurelwood Elementary School

Santa Clara Unified School District held a groundbreaking ceremony to celebrate the start of construction on Laurelwood Elementary School's new campus in Sunnyvale, California. The HMC design team, trade partners, district representatives, and faculty attended the event to mark the beginning of the new 10-acre, 78,250 SF school.

Laurelwood's campus design draws inspiration from the site's history and surrounding context. Before its development, the site was an agricultural area populated with orchards. Inspired by the agricultural patterns, vernacular barns, and the adjacent farm, the building design features different surface textures and earth-tone colors that form similar patterns. The colorful Laurelwood flowers and native vegetation are used as inspiration to develop an accent color palette, while the neutral earth tone colors work well with the existing

residential neighborhood. One-story buildings with pop-up collaboration roof areas and exterior color palettes and textures break up the scale of the buildings, provide visual interest, and tie the campus with the neighborhood character. The design concept creates open, active focal points (learning nodes) throughout the campus to engage students and display their work and activities. Creating intersections where students meet, play, and learn from each other was vital to nurturing informal interactions and dialog outside the traditional classroom environments.

The design team optimized daylighting, interior comfort, and building performance using efficient building systems and The building aims to be a Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS) Designed project and be ZNE-ready. Construction will be completed in 2026. ●

“The design concept creates open, active focal points throughout the campus to engage students and display their work and activities.”



JFK High School Progress

At a recent site walk HMC had the privilege of witnessing the incredible progress of Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) John F. Kennedy High School. The transformation is truly remarkable, from seismic retrofitting to the modernization of the performing arts center, library, and cafeteria to the addition of a stunning new two-story classroom building.

Kudos to the dedicated teams working hard to bring this vision to life. We can't wait for these spaces to be filled with the energy of learning and innovation. ●

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design for **HMC** good. **ARCHITECTS**

Founded with the purpose of anticipating community needs, HMC aims to create designs that have a positive impact, now and into the future.

As a 100 percent employee-owned firm, we focus primarily on opportunities to have the most direct contribution to communities — through healthcare, education, and civic spaces.

Learn more at
hmcarchitects.com



AWARDS + RANKINGS



PHOTO BY DAVID FENNEMA

Del Oro High School Wins IIDA Southern California Calibre Design Award

HMC Named SoCal National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) 2023 Firm of the Year



Fast Company Most Innovative Companies 2024



Los Angeles Business Journal's "Architectural Firms" list, ranked 9



Interior Design Magazine's Top 100 Giants of Design #9 in Education

