

P R E M I E R E I S S U E

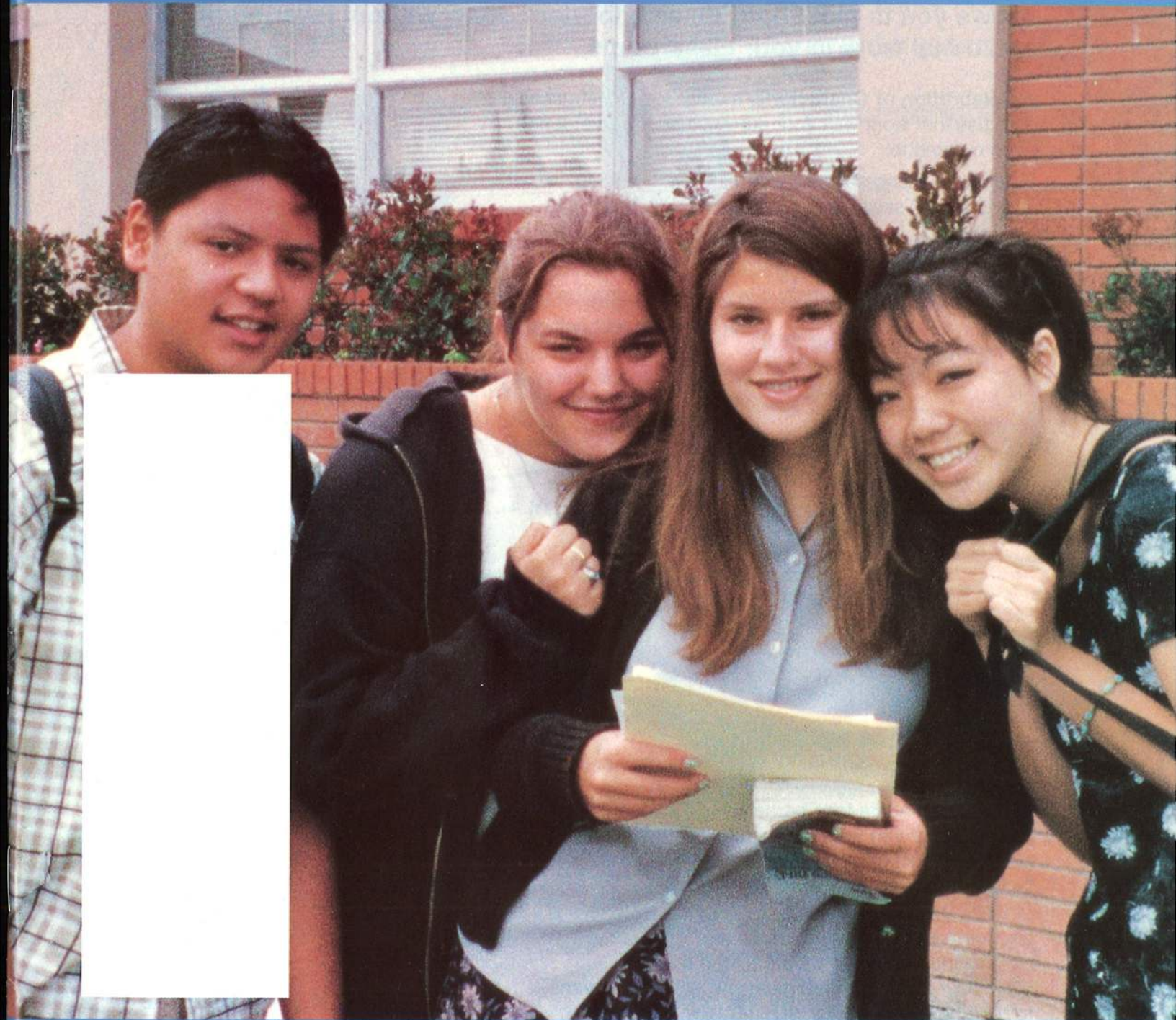
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SAFE



LEARNING



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Hudson High School:

Hudson School District
Superintendent:
Sheldon Berman

Hudson High School
Principal: John Stapelfeld

Architect and
Engineering Firm:
Symmes, Maini, and
McKee Associates

Community BY DESIGN

Hudson School District in Massachusetts is using the design of its new high school facility to help create a sense of closeness and community.

Schools have been getting larger even though everyone — from administrator to student — rues the trend. When Hudson School District in Massachusetts needed a new high school, it tackled the problem head on. “We want to create a safe learning environment for Hudson students,” said Hudson superintendent Sheldon Berman. “To accomplish this we are dividing the 1,200 student population into clusters of 100 to 150 students and organizing the architectural design to accommodate those clusters. In this way we can create a sense of community within a larger school that will enable students and teachers to get to know each other better and at the same time serve to enhance school safety.”

The result is a plan for one school divided into six clusters, as well as the usual areas common to the entire student body.

Current plans call for eighth-grade students to occupy the first-floor cluster nearest to the main entrance and the

administration offices. “This permits easier supervision by the administration of the youngest students,” said Stephanie Mashek of Symmes, Maini, and McKee Associates, the architect and engineering firm for the project. “It also means that eighth graders will travel the shortest distance to get to their home base.” Ninth graders, who need somewhat less supervision, will occupy the second-floor cluster just above the eighth graders.

Grades 10 through 12 will be divided into the remaining four clusters. District officials are not sure how the students will be grouped, but they will almost certainly not be grouped by grade. Instead there is talk of dividing them by educational emphases (e.g., college prep, business, tech, or art) or by randomly mixed communities left to develop their own cluster personality.

There are two different locker treatments. In the eighth- and ninth-grade areas, lockers are kept

within the cluster. “This facilitates the movement of younger students into their clusters and it reduces traffic in halls that all students have to pass through,” said Mashek. In the other clusters, lockers will be in the common hallways, which is “intended to keep the noise level down in the clusters themselves.”

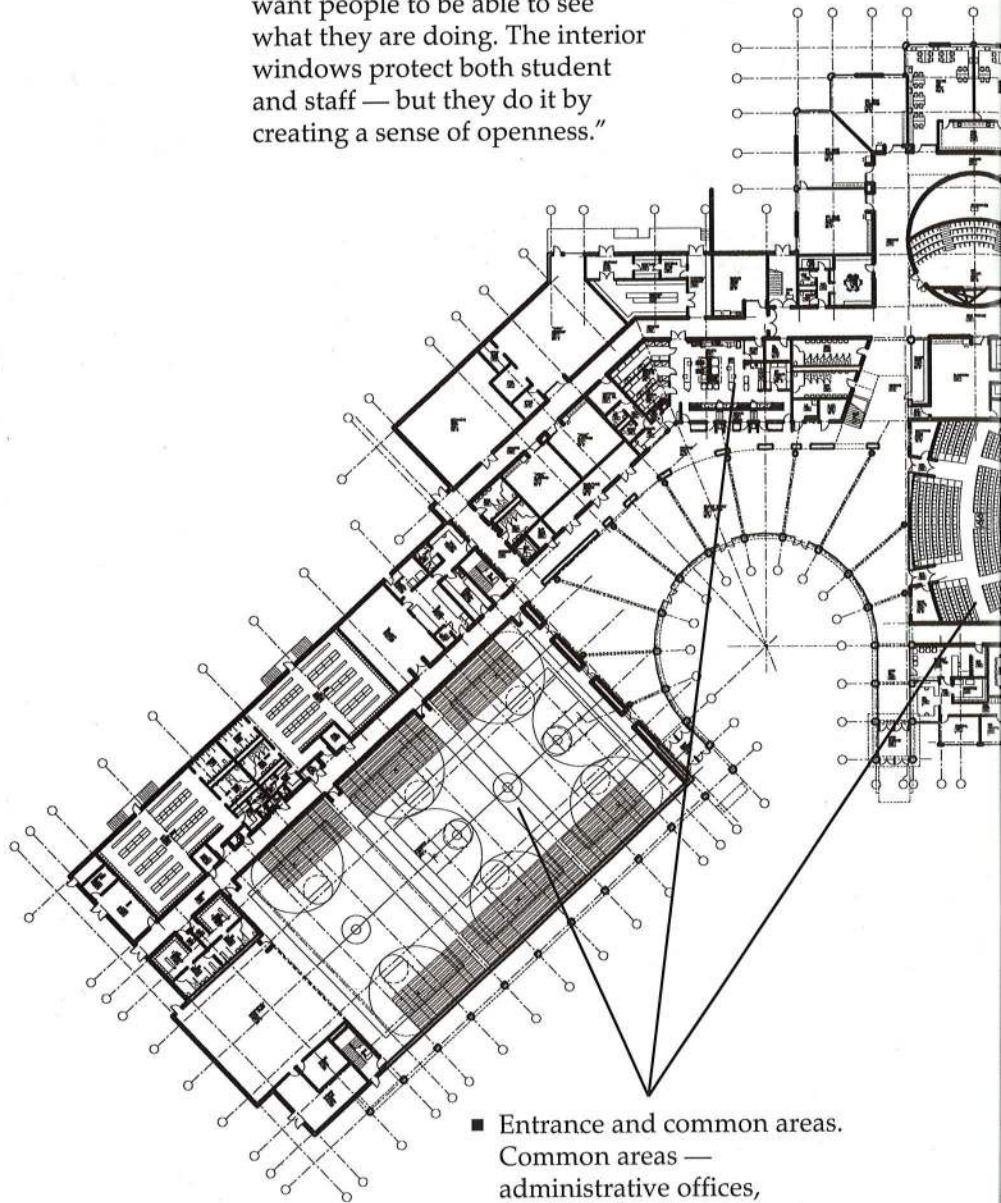
The planning and design process worked smoothly, Mashek said. The district determined the strategy of building a school consisting of small communities or clusters. The school’s administrators weighed in on the details. “The building committee itself was more far-reaching,” Mashek said. “They were concerned about exterior spaces and how the facility impacted the town. They wanted to make sure that student parking was well lit. They wanted to make sure that the driveway was safe for parents. Every member of the building committee sat on another committee in local government.”

The school is scheduled to open in the fall of 2002. ▶



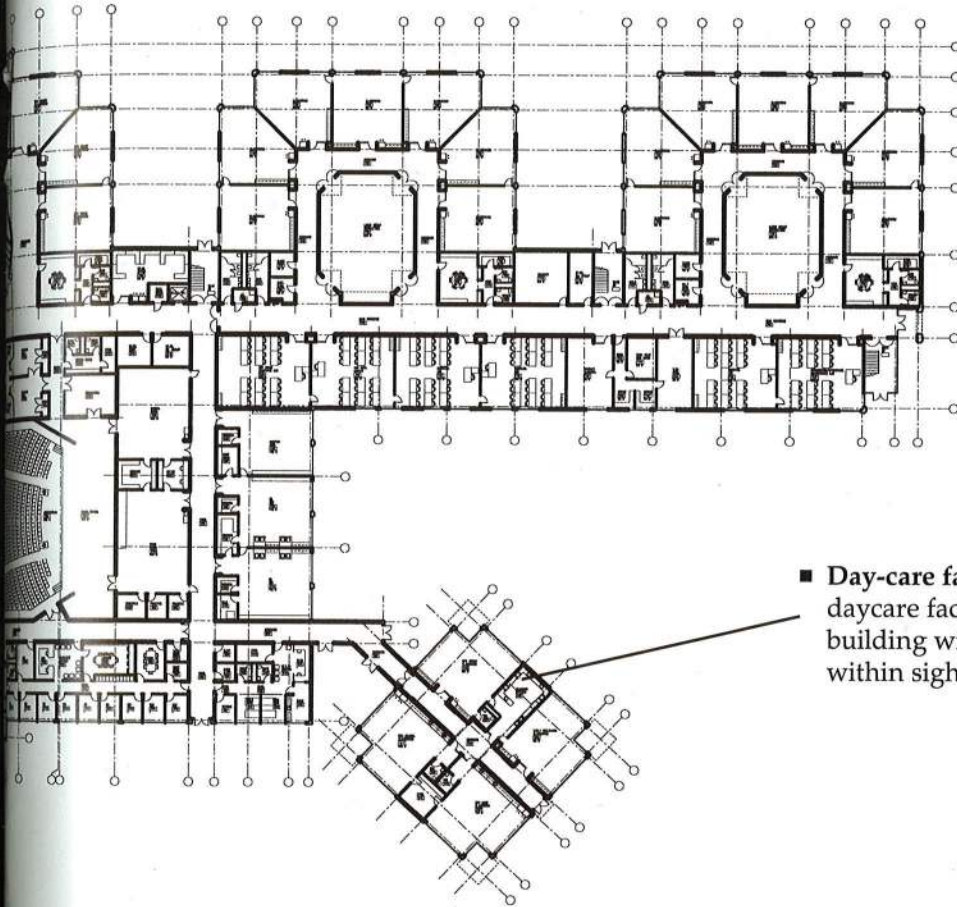
- **Interior windows.** With the exception of the nurse's office and other offices that need absolute privacy, classrooms and administration offices are visible through windows and sidelight treatments. "The counselors were really excited about this," Mashek said. "They want people to be able to see what they are doing. The interior windows protect both student and staff — but they do it by creating a sense of openness."

More features of Hudson High's design



- **Entrance and common areas.** Common areas — administrative offices, the cafeteria, the auditorium, the gym — are set on the periphery of a large entry lobby. This allows easier supervision of both visitors and students by administrators.

- **Airport-style bathrooms.** Each cluster has its own bathroom facilities with “doorless” entrances and exits. This provides visual privacy but permits loud noises or smoke to be discerned from the hallway.



- **Day-care facility.** Pre-school and daycare facility is in a satellite building with limited access and within sightlines of teachers.

- **Student parking.** Student parking is adjacent to the softball field, in a well-lit area visible by athletic director's office.

- **Drop-off zone.** The auto drop-off is directly in front of the main entrance, where driving behavior can be easily monitored by administrative staff. The bus drop-off is further down the loop in an area prohibited to autos. Students do not need to cross any traffic lanes.



Robson High School
 November 2008
 April 2008

