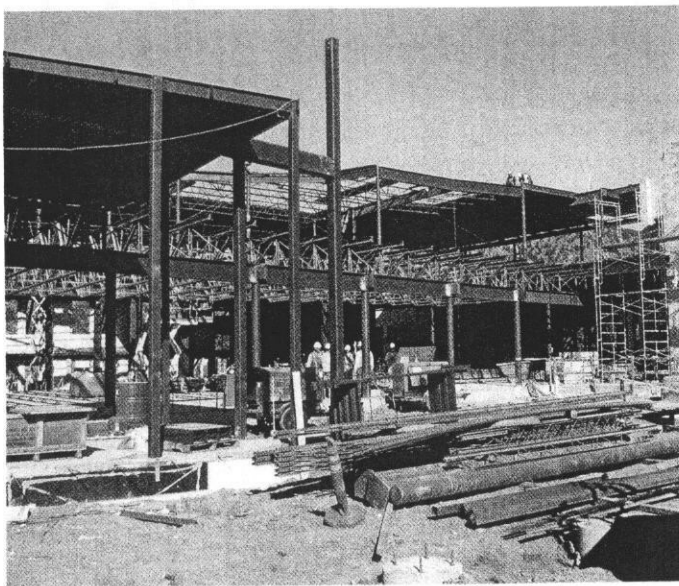




» The new Casey Middle School will replace the original 88,000-square-foot facility, which was deteriorating, with a modern 106,000-square-foot building.



# Casey's New Space

THE NEW CASEY MIDDLE SCHOOL WILL PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH NEW FACILITIES. BY ALAN DORICH

**F**or the students and faculty of Casey Middle School in Boulder, Colo., the time was right to make the move to a new facility. The school, which originally opened its doors in 1924, is being rebuilt as a facility that will accommodate 600 students in a new, 106,000-square-foot building.

Casey Middle School, which is part of the Boulder Valley School District (BVSD), was in dire need of a new building, Project Manager Louis Novak says. The original 88,000-square-foot facility "was in a state of deterioration," he admits, adding that the space was not large enough for the middle school program the district currently follows.

When finished, the new Casey Middle School will sit on an approximately 8.5-acre site and feature 34 instructional spaces, including computer science and special education classrooms. Additionally, it will feature a synthetic turf playfield.

"Because the site is so small and so constrained, we felt it was important to give the students as much of an all-year-round facility [as we could]," Novak says. "The turf [allows us to do] that."

## Key Collaborators

Construction started on the new Casey Middle School in January, while the demolition of the older building began in February, Novak says. "We're right [on schedule] to complete the project [in] mid-May 2010," he says.

He notes that the architect on the project is RB+B Architects Inc., based in Fort Collins, Colo. "We've worked with them on some smaller projects in the past," Novak says.

The district selected RB+B because of its record of having designed award-winning K-12 facilities, its commitment to sustainable design principles and its previous experience in LEED-certified schools. "They also had experience with geothermal [energy] for heating and cooling on recent projects, which was a feature we were looking at incorporating in the new school," he says. "They [are] a real good fit for the district."

BVSD also selected Saunders Construction Inc. as its construction manager/general contractor. "They have a very strong track record in Colorado," Novak says, noting the Englewood, Colo.-based company is renowned for its K-12 educational work.

"We found them to very much live up to their reputation in that respect," he says, noting that the company uses quality subcontractors, places an emphasis on meeting project schedules, establishes and follows quality control procedures, as well as cost controls that benefit owners and meet the needs of the K-12 market.

## Set and On Track

Before construction began, BVSD brought teachers, parents, stakeholders, contractor and architects together to develop the philosophy of the Casey Middle School project, Novak says. "That translated into the design," he recalls.

At first, he says, there was a strong sentiment among the group to save the original Casey Middle School. However, the group instead later made a decision to incorporate two brick and terracotta façades of the older building into the new structure, he says.

"The existing building was not structurally compatible to be converted into a modern middle school that incorporates the district's middle school standards," Novak says. "Also, the building had experienced substantial structural damage over the years due to being constructed on an expansive clay stone bedrock without having a proper foundation system.

"The façades were temporarily shored and braced while new construction was [completed] behind them," he says, noting that both façades were designed in the collegiate gothic style, "which was in vogue in the early part of the 20th century."

In addition, Novak says, the new school is set to achieve LEED gold certification. "We [intended] from the very beginning that this was going to be LEED-certified," he says, noting that RB+B utilized green consultant YRG Sustainability for the project.

"We've tracked it very closely," he says, adding that the certification is made possible in part by a contribution from the city of Boulder.

For instance, "90 percent of the building will be heated and cooled by geothermal [energy]," he says, adding that the building also will feature photovoltaic collectors and low-flow plumbing fixtures.

## Casey Middle School

[www.bvsd.com](http://www.bvsd.com)

- *Project budget: \$32 million+*
- *Location: Boulder, Colo.*
- *Construction employees: 100+*
- *Scope: New replacement school with 34 instructional spaces*

*"Ninety percent of the building will be heated and cooled by geothermal [energy]."*

*-Louis Novak, project manager*

Another feature of the school will be an underground parking area for 35 cars below its gym. "This saves valuable student activity space on the small site," Novak says, adding that the project will achieve this feature with little additional cost due to the site's sloping nature.

Novak adds that he doesn't see many obstacles to the new school being finished on time. "The only thing I could see that would really hamper the project would be a real turnaround in weather, where we had a horrible November and December," he says.

"[But] it would take a lot of that to do it," he asserts, noting that the new school is nearly fully enclosed and students will not be back in the building until August 2010.

## Making a Difference

Located in Boulder and Broomfield Counties, BVSD says its district stretches from the Continental Divide to Denver's suburbs, with 55 schools covering 500 square miles and educating approximately 28,500 students. "BVSD stands a leader in academic excellence with outstanding classroom teachers, exemplary schools and programs that support student achievement," the district states on its Web site.

An architect by profession, Novak joined the district 11 years ago and has enjoyed his time working in K-12 education. "To me, it's exciting because you really feel as though you're making a real contribution to the community and the betterment of teaching children," he says. ♦

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