



*“Chippewa Junior/Senior High School is one of the most recent projects completed by C.T.Taylor Construction. We are proud to have built this 21st Century educational facility for the Chippewa District.”*

## **Growing Together**

### **New Chippewa Junior/Senior High School takes root on former farm**

By Eric J. Eakin | Photos by Scott Pease

**C**rops once grew on a 40-acre plot in Doylestown, 13 miles southwest of Akron and atop the highest point in Wayne County. Now growing on the site are students, and intellects, and chances for advancement, and brighter futures.

That is because the Chippewa Local School District invested upwards of \$25 million on a new 100,000-square-foot junior/senior high school accommodating approximately 650 students in grades seven through 12, and an attached 10,000-square-foot performing arts center.

The project was designed by Hasenstab Architects, who were selected to work with the district and the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission after prior unsuccessful attempts at passing bond issues.

“We feel that our preliminary design work on reconfiguring some of their existing buildings aided the district in the promotion of the bond issue, and helped to form the relationship that carried forward,” says Dennis Check, president of Hasenstab.

#### **Site advantages**

The building is separated into two levels to take advantage of the natural sloping topography of the site, and to allow the building to unfold in a dynamic fashion along the length of Portage Street, the main thoroughfare in front of the building.

The upper level of the building houses common areas, administration offices, two meeting rooms, a kitchen, a clinic and the cafeteria/commons overlooking the gym. Also on the



upper level are media and technology classrooms, science classrooms, and two similar wings of classroom space, distinguished by middle school/high school function.

The lower level of the building features a gymnasium with seating for 900 students, a beautiful new performing arts center, locker rooms and classroom/practice space for the music department.

The 426-seat performing arts center design includes sloped seating, a “dead hung stage” with motorized hoists for stage electrics, unique curtain and track rigging, an acoustic enclosure, a multi-channel sound mixing board, built-in speakers and subwoofers, and several gen-

eral-purpose tracks for the quick and easy movement of scenery.

There are three computer labs with approximately 25 PCs in each, about twice as many as the old building.

Outside and beyond a small bio-swale are a soccer field and two practice fields.

“When we started designing this building, there was a lot of back and forth, but everybody agreed that we wanted it to be a showcase for the community,” says Dan Nagy, school board member. “That was the one big idea that came out of it all – how to combine the new with the old. We wanted better spaces for science education and we wanted a performing arts center. That was big on the list. We



**TAKING SHAPE** The main stairway from the lower level gymnasium/auditorium to the student dining/academic wings includes a collaborative-learning seating area off to one side.

just wanted to modernize, and have more room to do more things.”

### Construction details

The school was built atop a reinforced concrete slab. Walls are load-bearing masonry with steel and joist framing, while the few areas that are two stories are constructed with precast concrete plank floors.

The roofing is asphalt shingles atop a sandwich of metal roof decking and plywood supported by light-gauge metal trusses. Insulation with an R22 rating is tacked to the roof trusses, while exterior walls were sprayed with two inches of foam insulation and have an R20 rating.

With an eye towards the future, the pitched roof allows district personnel access to most all areas of the building if new wiring, cabling or other means of communication come into play.”

You can get up there easily if things need to be added or adjusted in the future, to introduce whatever new technology might be available,” Nagy says.

“One theme that came out was we wanted pitched roofs for aesthetics and

for ease of maintenance,” says Hasenstab’s lead architect Greg Chaplin. “We also wanted it to reflect and respect the residential nature of the neighborhood.”

For the exterior, the designers specified Glen-Gery brick in “Sable Brown” and “Mansfield Red,” as well as Pella windows and Stanley doors.

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**Dan Nagy**  
Chippewa Local School District

“We stayed with Pella windows to give the building more of a residential look,” Chaplin says. Most all windows have mini-blinds sandwiched between the panes of glass.

The majority of flooring, about 60,000 square feet, consists of rubber tile, with terrazzo in the corridor between gym and auditorium. There are also areas of vinyl tile, carpeting and epoxy flooring.

“Rubber is a more expensive, but longer-lasting, material,” says David Hamm, project manager for C.T. Taylor, the construction management company hired to build the school. “In the last 10 years, more schools have gone to rubber flooring if they can afford it. You don’t have to wax it or strip it. The more use it gets, the better it looks. It’s about twice the price, but over time it pays for itself.”

### Coming together

The district purchased the site, a former farm, about 20 years ago, knowing they might need it someday as their existing infrastructure aged and their district population grew.

“The idea for quite some time was to move the junior and senior high schools down here,” says Superintendent of Schools Todd Osborn.

After voters in 2015 approved a 4.9-mill bond issue that generated about \$16.7 million, and the district committed to another \$4.6 million, the building came together in a number of phases, with the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC), the co-owner of



**ARTS + REC** A second-floor dining area (top) overlooks the state-of-the-art gymnasium (middle). Elsewhere, the school's performing arts center (bottom) provides the community with a state-of-the-art facility capable of hosting a wide range of events.

the building, also committing significant funding for the project.

Hasenstab Architects, PTA Engineering (mechanical, electrical and plumbing), Dynamix Engineering (technology) and Environmental Design Group were selected as the A/E team in March 2016. Thorson Baker and Associates (structural) came aboard soon after. (Interestingly, one of PTA Engineering's lead engineers, Eric Wright, is a graduate of Chippewa Schools.)

In April 2016, C.T. Taylor Construction was selected as the Construction Manager at Risk. Early site work, including earthwork and the installation of utilities, started that fall and continued through the winter, while foundation work, consisting of foundations and cast-in-place concrete walls separating the lower and upper levels of the building, continued into the spring of 2017.

The balance of the project started in the spring of 2017 and continued through the following year, completed in time to welcome students, teachers and administrative staff on time in August 2018.

### Key features

Hamm says there are three unique elements to the project.

First, the old Doylestown High School stone sign from 1909 was salvaged and incorporated into the new building, he says. It now accompanies an original, cast bronze 700-pound school bell on display by the entrance to the gymnasium. "There were some initial conversations about putting the bell in the tower, but the overall consensus was to keep it at eye level where it could be rung if someone desired," he says.

Second, the student dining area overlooks the gymnasium through large windows and includes some adjacent seating.

"This gives the area a 'loge seating effect,'" he says. "Additionally, there is a glass overhead door that opens from the dining area into the gym. You can enter



the gym by walking down the bleachers from the overhead door, or you can exit the gym by going up the bleachers and through the overhead door into the dining area."

Third, the main stairway from lower level gymnasium/auditorium to the student dining/academic wings includes a collaborative-learning seating area off to the side.

The new school building was constructed to achieve LEED Silver certification. "Part of the LEED requirement was expanded community use," Chaplin says. "They wanted the building to offer three spaces that the community could come in and use. The gymnasium, performing arts center and soccer fields

were all designated for community use when they were not being used by the school district."

The building also utilizes advanced LED lighting throughout. "There's not a single incandescent or fluorescent bulb in the building," Nagy says, noting that motion-detection switches control most all lighting.

Each education wing has its own air handler, totaling seven units. There also are seven heating and cooling zones.

There are 320 parking spaces scattered throughout the site. "That was a discussion, too, between what the district needed for everyday use and what might be needed for a larger event at the performing arts center," Hamm



says. "Then you have to factor in the LEED requirements. They want you to keep parking to a minimum. You also have local zoning requirements. A lot of people had their hands in what that number would be."

The district's school colors, blue and white, are incorporated in the building's color scheme and are reflected in the carpeting, floor tiles, seating and wall and trim paint. Hasenstab designers selected all the colors and furniture. Furniture was specified by Hasenstab and supplied by Continental Furniture.

"We wanted the school colors to be present but not overwhelming," Chaplin says. "We didn't want everything plastered with 'Chippewa Blue.'

### New environment

The students have expressed their appreciation for the new building, Osborn says.

"They like the flow of the building, that their classrooms are close together," he explains. "They like the open common areas, where they can move around and mingle. They feel more 'adult-like,' more appreciated. The



Photo courtesy of C.T. Taylor Construction

**BUILT TO LAST** The school was built atop a reinforced concrete slab. Walls are load-bearing masonry with steel and joist framing, while the few areas that are two stories are constructed with precast concrete plank floors.

independent tables in the cafeteria allow them to move about more easily than long, narrow tables."

The 40 faculty members also have voiced their gratitude for the new building, Osborn says. "They like that they have their own lunch room with a soda machine in it," he says. "They like

the rooms, the new technology. The old school was built in 1971, so this new building is a huge improvement for everyone." **P**

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**CREATIVE SPACE** The school incorporates a diverse blend of classrooms, labs and other learning spaces, including a purpose-built art room with communal seating and studio lighting.



**ORIGINAL ELEMENTS** The old Doylestown High School stone sign from 1909 was salvaged and incorporated into the new building. It now accompanies an original, cast bronze 700-pound school bell on display by the entrance to the gymnasium.

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