

Barrington Middle School *Prairie Campus*



*Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) **Award of Distinction** for Excellence in Design of Educational Environments*
*Society of American Registered Architects (SARA) **Certificate of Appreciation** in recognition of the contribution to the profession of architecture and the building industry*

Barrington Community Unit School District 220 · Barrington, Illinois

Barrington's Middle School Prairie Campus was built in response to a growing enrollment and the need to accommodate alternative organizational and teaching strategies. The inherent flexibility of the building was a priority after the difficulties faced by the District in attempting to convert "open-plan" schools to a more traditional classroom environment.

Prairie Campus occupies 14 acres within an 80-acre park, which faces a nature preserve and includes protected wildlife areas. The design and construction of the school included a study of the entire ecosystem and a cooperative planning effort with local conservation groups to restore degraded wetlands areas adjacent to the school.

A three-wing plan creates three small communities or "houses". Each house then becomes a school within a school, containing team and computer space, a group project area, a special education room, staff planning areas, and support space.

The school incorporates the latest technology, with computers in all classrooms. A Technology Center features computer modules accommodating two to four students each. The modules allow self-directed experiences in aeronautics, robotics, physical sciences, desk-top publishing, radio, television, CADD/CAM and laser technology. Telephone connections integrated in every classroom provide voice or data links to the world beyond in addition to standard access to the school's media center.

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At the heart of the school is the media center. Its placement, at an intermediate level between the upper and lower floors, offers students equal access from each house. The level change gives the media center its own identity. The openness of the space combined with its direct relationship to the classroom areas is an invitation to the learning experience. The glass window wall to the exterior reflects the technological advances incorporated within the room and opens the school to the natural classroom of the world.

Budget

- Building Size 125,000 SF
- Student Capacity 1000
- Construction Cost \$9,176,000

Time

- Construction Start Spring 1991
- Completion Date Summer 1992

Key Staff

- John Maurer
- Mimi Troy

Contact

Don Thompson, Principal (Retired)
310 East James Street
Barrington, Illinois 60010
847.381.6300



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