



Cooper Elementary School

Bella Vista, Arkansas

Hight-Jackson Associates, PA

Entire School/Campus Building
New Construction

HIGHT-JACKSON ASSOCIATES, PA

5201 Village Parkway,
Suite 300
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DESIGN TEAM

Gary Ryel, AIA,
Project Designer
Jeff Brust, AIA,
Project Architect
Gary Jackson, AIA,
Principal-in-Charge
Caroline Hall Martinez,
Interior Designer

OWNER/CLIENT

Bentonville School District
Bentonville, AR

Dr. Gary Compton,
Superintendent
479/254-5000

Type of School
and Grades Served:
Elementary School, K-4

Area of Building:
89,566 square feet

Square Foot Cost: \$139

Cost of Construction:
\$12.4 million

Contract Date: June 2006

Completion Date: Dec. 2007

Percent of Completion: 100%



FRONT ENTRANCE

The architect's challenge was to design a new school to accommodate the educational needs of elementary students in a rural natural environment that was originally developed as a retirement community. This northwest Arkansas community has experienced explosive growth and changing demographics in recent years, including younger families moving to the area for employment opportunities and driving the need for a new school.

The developer of the retirement community owned the site and donated it to the school district for the community's first elementary school. The Bella Vista Stables had occupied the site for decades and was a community landmark. It was the intent of the design team that the building reflect the site's past occupancy and natural setting.



STUDENTS IN ATRIUM



STAIR

The site is surrounded on one side by a steep hillside and a natural spring that flows year round. The building footprint was shaped around the narrow portion of the site at the bottom of the hill. Traffic flow from existing streets to the north and west determined parking and entry

areas. To reduce congestion on the heavily traveled road used by residents of the community, bus traffic and visitor traffic were designed to occur at opposite ends of the site.

Much like the former barn loft in the stables, a two-story vestibule gives volume and access to the school's second



BUS CANOPY DETAIL



OFFICE ENTRY



EXTERIOR AT DUSK

PHOTOS: JANET WARLECK

floor. Clerestory windows allow natural daylight to spill into the space below. The exposed steel beams at the monumental stair are reminiscent of barn rafters and are a pronounced design element against the white walls and metal roof deck. Stone veneer below the stair brings

exterior material into the interior, adding visual warmth and texture.

The corridors are spacious, with all common functions located near the administration area. Two academic wings placed off the foyer balance the number of students on each side of the

building, while keeping the length of the corridors necessitated by the narrow site to a minimum.

Provision for natural daylight to all occupied areas and use of geothermal heat pumps maximize economy of operation for this facility.

The barn-red exterior metal

siding used on the second story is a nod to the barn and stables that previously occupied the site. The green and neutral metal siding and the natural toned metal roof, combined with stone veneers and laminated timbers, create a building that looks quite at home in its surroundings. ■