

Green Building Case Study

J.J. Pickle Elementary School / St. John Community Center

A collaboration between Austin Independent School District and the City of Austin



The J.J. Pickle Elementary School / St. John Community Center, a unique joint venture between the Austin Independent School District and the City of Austin, was a demonstration project integrating sustainability into design and operations. The new building, located several blocks east of IH-35 between St. John's Ave. and Hwy 290, is energy and water efficient, more healthful for students and teachers and provides a much needed home for community services and activities in this northeast Austin neighborhood. In addition to a neighborhood center, the facility will house a health clinic, a new public library and an Austin Police Dept. community policing office.

Green Building features in the project:

- Proper solar orientation allows for day-lit spaces in the gymnasium, cafeteria, and all of the classrooms, which, in conjunction with direct and indirect light fixtures and dimmable ballasts, reduces cooling loads and peak energy demand by 40% in addition to providing high quality light. Total energy cost is reduced by 25%.
- This is the first AISD and City of Austin facility that will have rainwater collection. Rainwater will be collected on the metal roof and sent to cisterns. It will be used to replace water that evaporates out of the air conditioners cooling tower.
- Salvaged longleaf pine is used for the stage floor.
- Insulated concrete tilt-wall was selected based on its multiple functions as structural support, insulation, and finished surface. All concrete contains between 20% to 35% fly-ash, a by-product of coal burning power plants.
- Materials were used in their natural state where possible, eliminating routine maintenance for finished surfaces.
- Impervious cover on site was minimized by utilizing "head-in parking" off the street instead of parking lots on site.
- Low VOC paints and finishes were specified throughout.
- A life cycle cost analysis indicated that this facility would save in excess of \$12 million over a conventional school.

The project's design goals and concepts were developed through an integrated team approach of the architects, engineers, construction manager, sustainability experts, school district, City of Austin, and neighborhood residents. Each idea brought forward was evaluated for short-term criteria, long-term impact, and overall sustainability.

The success of this project reflects on the cooperation between a variety of designers, sustainability professionals, city officials, and members of the community. This project received a three star rating.