



nerej

Harriman with Ledgewood completes 200,000 s/f multi-phase Biddeford High School

May 02, 2013 - Northern New England

Harriman, Maine-based architects and engineers, together with a seasoned owner's representative and construction manager Ledgewood, developed a multi-year, multi-phased, no-leeway schedule to transform a 50-year-old Maine high school into a 21st century learning environment, winning over skeptics and saving millions in the process.

School officials knew they had to address their high school "issue" when Biddeford middle schoolers, who graduated from the city's recently completed facility, were shocked on their first day in high school at the building's condition and environment. After looking at three options, Harriman and the school committee concluded a total renovation and modest addition was the best and economical choice to turn the school into a modern, technology-rich school.

There were many skeptics in the city. The existing 200,000 s/f school was typical of its 1960s era design with double-loaded corridors, a non-descript, inefficient curtainwall façade and outdated HVAC and building systems, and the building had code, safety, ADA and egress issues.

The nine-phase construction plan developed was critical to bringing projects costs down and meeting the tight 28-month schedule. The phasing plan made adjustments for educational needs and schedule, emphasized the requirement for double and weekend work shifts, and advocated for complete collaboration and cooperation. Nearly every corner and space in the building was affected; only the foundation, structural steel, and some of the interior and exterior walls remained.

A key to project success was ongoing communications with students, teachers, neighbors, and parents. The project superintendents wrote a weekly report outlining work coming up and what building areas would be affected and monthly online newsletters detailed completed, ongoing and upcoming work. During weekly project team meetings decisions were quickly made, not postponed, when issues arose.

In June 2011, the two-story addition to the building, containing the new entrance, administrative wing and second-floor library - was completed. Students and teachers got a first glimpse at how the transformation was taking shape. It was a well-received preview of what was to come that made it easier for all to put up with a final year of disruptions and inconvenience.

All work was completed in late August 2012 on schedule and under the \$34-million budget. The transformation of 50-year-old Biddeford High School was complete. The school committee held a dedication and open house for city residents May 2012. Skepticism vanished and residents left with smiles on their faces at the new high school the community now had.