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Pickard Chilton hosts ground breaking for the Barack H. Obama Magnet University School

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New Haven, CT Pickard Chilton broke ground on June 14 for the Barack H. Obama Magnet University School, the firm's first project in the city.

The three-story, 63,000 s/f project on the campus of Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) will be a New Haven Public School (NHPS) for 490 Pre-K through 4th grade students. It will also provide opportunities for interning, volunteering, and mentoring for SCSU's School of Education students preparing to be teachers. The Barack H. Obama Magnet University School will strengthen the collaboration between SCSU and NHPS, by fostering a shared emphasis on innovation and best practices for STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines, and special education.

Designed in collaboration with Hartford-based JCJ Architecture, the school's architectural design creates a positive learning environment by providing all classrooms with exposure to daylight and scenic views. All primary classrooms have dramatic views of West Rock. The heart of the building is the cafetorium and gym, which can be combined to create a larger space for whole school gatherings. This space has visual connections to the classroom corridors, and to the exterior play areas. The building is designed around an open courtyard that embraces the adjacent woodlands in order to engage students with nature. Two wings around the courtyard contain the media center, art, music, and science discovery center.

With a record of over 60 million s/f of LEED Gold (or better) buildings, Pickard Chilton incorporated in the Barack H. Obama Magnet University School such sustainable features as photovoltaic rooftop panels and green roofs, and complies with the NHPS high performance schools design requirements and the state of Connecticut high performance building standards.

"We are excited and proud to be a part of this project, the first in our hometown of New Haven," said Pickard Chilton principal Jon Pickard. "The Barack H. Obama Magnet University School will be first and foremost an education and innovation facility, and our design was developed with the needs of both the school's students and SCSU's teachers-in-training in mind."

Pickard Chilton has extensive experience working on both public and institutional facilities, having designed projects such as the Minnesota State Senate Building, the Orville L. Freeman Building, and the Emory University Hospital, among others.

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