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Shawmut Design and Construction renovates student center at Governor's Academy

April 17, 2020 - Construction Design & Engineering

Byfield, MA Shawmut Design and Construction renovated the Peter Marshall French Student Center at The Governor's Academy. Celebrating the official groundbreaking on February 1, and scheduled for completion in September 2020, the renovation and expansion will enhance the student experience for more than 400 boarding and day students with a combined 16,000 s/f of improved space that will expand campus life.

The 40-year-old student center placed on the academy's 456-acre campus provides space for classrooms, the school bookstore, a snack bar, and student gathering areas. Shawmut, in partnership with TMS Architects, will bring new innovative amenities to the facility—including flexible learning and gathering spaces, a café and grill, an outdoor terrace, a wellness studio, day student locker rooms, and all-new humanities classrooms.

“Dedicated to educational innovation and steeped in history as the oldest boarding school in New England, we're incredibly excited to further enhance the remarkable student experience at The Governor's Academy,” said Ron Simoneau, executive vice president of education at Shawmut.

“The renovation to the Peter Marshall French Student Center will ensure the facility continues to serve and transform campus life for years to come while forging a reimagined heart of the community.”

Designed to create a welcoming place where students can connect with others, the renovations will transform the center into a hub of campus activity, hosting afternoon and weekend programming, club meetings, and social gatherings for the community. To accommodate the Academy's day students, the renovated facility will feature new locker and shower facilities, and designated drop-off and pick-up areas.

Shawmut's work enhancing the student center's multiple common areas will include enclosing an existing courtyard with a new steel structure that will convert the space into a refreshed dining area complete with an all-glass feature skylight. Plans also feature increased accessibility as well as a large outside terrace spanning the northern side of the building. The terrace will be used as a three-season gathering area for students while creating an outdoor classroom space for teachers. Faculty housing and classroom space will remain an important component of the overall building, ensuring reliable student and faculty interaction throughout the day.

At the groundbreaking ceremony, head of school Dr. Peter Quimby remarked that support for this project has come from every corner of the community: alumni, parents, past parents, grandparents, trustees, and past trustees. “We are grateful to all of you for believing in our vision for what this space can be for our students, and for stepping forward to help make that vision a reality,” he said.

Shawmut’s work on The Governor’s Academy represents the latest in the firm’s extensive academic portfolio, with recently completed projects including Billerica Memorial High School and Noble and Greenough School’s Lawrence Auditorium in Massachusetts, Eden Park Elementary in Rhode Island, and Choate Rosemary Hall’s Colony Hall in Connecticut.

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