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Suffolk, Skanska USA Building, Inc., Perkins Eastman and the city hold topping off at new Lowell High School gym

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Representatives of the city of Lowell, Massachusetts School Building Authority, Lowell Public Schools District and project team gathered for the topping-off of the gymnasium at the new Lowell High School.

Lowell, MA The city of Lowell, Massachusetts School Building Authority, Lowell Public Schools District, faculty, students, and the community celebrated the topping-off of the gymnasium at the new Lowell High School. The gymnasium is part of a larger development effort, comprising a modernization and expansion, for Lowell High School—the second-largest high school in Mass. The \$343 million project is slated to be fully complete for the 2026-2027 academic year.

The project's construction manager is building contractor Suffolk, the owner's project manager is Skanska USA Building, Inc., and the architect is Perkins Eastman.

The new school is not only the largest in the city's history, it is also among the largest projects for the Massachusetts School Building Authority. The project encompasses 622,777 s/f, comprising 388,262 s/f of renovated space and 234,515 s/f of new construction, including the gymnasium and Freshman Academy. Upon completion, Lowell High School will serve 3,520 students in grades 9-12.

Workers guided the final beam into place during the topping-off of the new Lowell High School gymnasium.

The design mines history—the school’s own as the nation’s first co-ed public high school, the city’s, and the site’s—to create a unique 21st-century learning environment that celebrates the future of K-12 education in Lowell. With the school sitting on the historic Merrimack Canal, the design leverages the idea of canals as “connectors” in order to enhance the educational experience through multiple lenses and reinforce the school’s civic presence within the community.

Suffolk project manager Pannha San Chung (left), of Lowell, and her daughters Olivia (center) and Vivian took part in the public beam-signing prior to the topping-off of the new Lowell High School gymnasium.

The centerpiece of the design is a new campus quad flanked by the new academic and gymnasium additions.

This outdoor space creates a natural oasis visible from multiple spaces throughout the school and community, connects to the historic Merrimack Canal and Lucy Larcom Park (a part of the Lowell National Historic Park), and helps create a street edge via a new pedestrian boulevard.

As a reflection of the importance of this school within its community, Lowell residents were invited to sign the structural beam hoisted in place in advance of the topping-off celebration.

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