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First LEED®-certified public school in Texas announced

HOUSTON, TX – The [U.S. Green Building Council](#) recently awarded the West Brazos Junior High School in Brazoria, Texas the distinctive Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. This school is the first public primary or secondary school in the state to receive this certification, officially recognizing the facility as an environmentally responsible and healthy place to grow and learn. This news follows pending legislation to require new public buildings in Texas to be LEED certified.

In schools, sustainable design can foster a better learning and teaching environment. Multiple studies show that improvements in air quality and natural daylighting improve test scores and reduce absences. According to the district, **test scores** for WBJH comparing 2006 (old campus) to 2007 (new campus) improved.

- **Reading** improved 5 percentage points to 96 percent
- **Mathematics** improved 4 percentage points to 91 percent
- **Social Studies** improved 7 percentage points to 92 percent
- **Attendance** percentage improved from 95.21 % to 95.70 percent

LEED certification for West Brazos Junior High was achieved without adding significant cost to the construction budget. Additionally, maintenance, operations and utilities costs are lower compared to traditional facilities, saving taxpayers long-term lifecycle dollars.

“Sustainable design is a matter of good planning rather than spending money,” explains Martha Buckner, assistant superintendent of the Columbia-Brazoria Independent School District. “We found that implementing sustainable features into our school did not add to our construction costs. Better yet, our students have achieved higher test scores during their first year in the new school. Rather than spending more on the operational side, sustainable features give us an opportunity to invest in instruction.”

“Planning for this new school centered around the goal of achieving LEED certification without increasing the project’s budget,” explains Jennifer Henrikson, SHW’s lead architect and project manager for the school. “With the help of a supportive school district sharing the same goal of sustainability, we were able to show that better-planned, more sustainable schools can help increase student achievement without costing more money.”

Founded in 1945, [SHW Group](#) is an architectural firm specializing in learning environments where ideas are sparked, minds are engaged and future leaders are inspired. SHW’s work spans the globe with projects in 23 states and three countries. We believe educators have the power to change the world through each student they impact. Our mission is to make significant and lasting contributions to communities by creating efficient learning environments that maximize potential and inspire excellence.

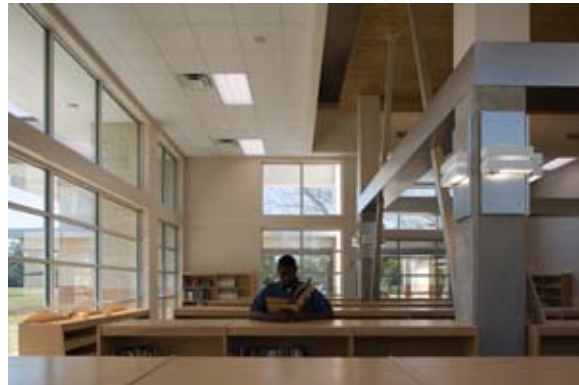


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Attachments: Two pages

West Brazos Junior High School

Columbia-Brazoria Independent School District



West Brazos Junior High School is located on a 53-acre undeveloped, beautifully wooded site. The building's dominant material is concrete masonry, chosen for its natural, durable quality. Stucco and metal panels compliment the masonry to make a more economical structure without compromising durability and maintenance costs. Natural colors of beiges, browns and rusts, complimented by zero-maintenance and energy-efficient green tinted windows allow the building to blend with the natural beauty of the heavily wooded campus.

A 260-foot circulation spine connects multiple learning/activity pod centers that feature clerestory windows, allowing natural light to penetrate deep into the core spaces. Landscaped courtyards provide generous views while classroom windows feature Low-E glazing and inexpensive shading devices that double as light shelves, distributing natural light further into learning spaces. The site consists of rain water detention and natural filtration areas and naturally preserved native landscape that are drought resistant and thrive in the regional coastal environment.

West Brazos Junior High School is the first public junior high school in the state to be LEED certified.

Location | Brazoria, TX

Grades Served | 7-8

Site | 53 acres

Facility | 91,500 SF

Capacity | 600

Const. Cost | \$9,931,000

Cost/SF | \$108.54

Completion | 5-1-06



Additional Green Features:

- Interior finish materials with 17.7 percent combined recycled content
- Implementation of Green housekeeping protocol by the school district (using Green Seal cleaning products and procedures to improve safety and indoor air quality) and a recycling policy that includes storage and collection
- Construction waste management, which diverted more than 55 percent of construction waste from the landfill
- Locally manufactured materials (within 500 miles) comprises more than 55 percent of the school's building materials, which positively impacts the local economy and reduces the effects of transporting materials from long distances
- Low-E window glazing, improving the thermal efficiency of the building while transmitting daylight into classrooms, the library, cafeteria and office areas
- A building footprint and paving placed on the site to minimize disruption to the existing pastoral site - a natural habitat to numerous trees and wetlands
- Native landscaping that is drought resistant and thrives in the region's coastal environment, reducing the need for water usage and irrigation systems
- A highly reflective Energy Star roofing system and reflective paving, which reduces the heat island effect
- Encouraging alternative transportation by including bicycle storage, a changing room, plug-in stations for electric vehicles and preferred parking for carpooling

