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Heartland architect honored for 'Outstanding Project'

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If you haven't been in Edmond Public Schools' Heartland Middle School, you are missing out on seeing a specially-designed school. Its architect, Frankfurt Short Bruza has received an Outstanding Project award for excellence in educational facility design for spring 2017 by Learning By Design magazine.

The award took in the school's overall plan, the architectural design and its attributes worthy of imitation.

A jury of architects from Learning By Design commended FSB for its success in designing Heartland Middle School. They used six criteria in their selection: innovation, community need, interior design, sustainability, functional design, and 21st Century Learning.

A jury comment included, "Spaces are inviting to students with flexibility for different learners and activities."

What makes Heartland unique?

Built with an abundance of natural elements and state-of-the art safety and technology, Heartland Middle School is designed to encourage collaboration, exploration and discovery. The facility shares the site with Frontier Elementary forming a campus approach to learning.

Among Heartland's many unique features are the numerous collaboration areas. The two-story "learning stairs" and the outdoor courtyard and amphitheater offer students an assembly and presentation space. Grade levels are divided into wings and the wings into six "neighborhoods" — with each wing having its own color scheme. Many classrooms have a pivoting wall that can be used for flexible learning space opportunities. In addition, special needs students have their own suite in the school complete with a safe room that is separate from the majority of the students.

Family & Consumer Science Room

Heartland's elective class offerings are located in a wing unto itself, and school personnel are especially excited about the arts programs.

"We have accomplished educators leading our vocal music, band, orchestra, drama, and visual arts classes," a spokesperson said. "Our elective wing also features our FACS (Family and Consumer Sciences), Around the World, Enrichment, Tech Lit, and the Gateway to Technology spaces. Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) are celebrated and encouraged here!

"Our Gateway to Technology program features aspects of architectural engineering, avionics, robotics, and various other technologies. The school also boasts a dynamic media center with an integrated computer and a STEM Studio.

For students' physical education, the building will have a competition gymnasium for different indoor sports activities. A practice gymnasium is also available for student activities and will double as a safe room sized for the building occupancy in the event of a security or weather emergency.

Heartland also includes competition baseball and softball fields, and practice amenities for track, football and tennis. Heartland also features a full complement of extra-curricular athletic programs including football, cross country, softball, volleyball, basketball, wrestling, baseball, tennis, golf, and track. Students can join athletic teams once they are in the seventh grade.

The spokesperson said, "Heartland Middle School is truly a model of what school design can be and a showpiece for Edmond Public Schools."