

# Chelsea Intermediate School

## Frankfort, IL

**IE**d109-01

**Category: Institutional - Education**

### Program Statement

Chelsea Intermediate School has been reimagined through a comprehensive renovation and major addition. This high-performing school, located in the Chicagoland suburbs, is now a dynamic, welcoming learning environment for 1,000+ Grades 3-5 students. The design for Chelsea's transformation embraces an educational vision that the entire facility is a teaching tool, providing the spaces and resources for teachers and students to "spread their wings" and realize their full potential.

First built in 1975, Chelsea's many changes over four decades began with the consolidation of two separate buildings into one, followed by episodic renovations and additions. The net result was inefficient, outmoded spaces evidenced by:

- Grade level students housed in disconnected locations
- Multi-grade spaces scattered throughout the building
- Increased travel times due to circulation challenges
- Lack of a central core and no cohesive organization of space and resources

Today, Chelsea is a colorful, light-filled environment that supports a thriving learning community where students are clustered in grade level neighborhoods, each branded with distinctive branding colors that aid in wayfinding not only for occupants, but also for first responders. Throughout the school, extended learning and breakout areas as well as wide corridors with seating niches provide a wealth of flexible spaces for learning and social development.

Shared learning and support spaces now occupy the core of the building, easily accessible to all. In these spaces, the branded grade-level color finishes are blended, reinforcing communal identity and pride across grade levels. The STEM lab, art room and media center are co-located with both visual and physical connections. The new cafeteria is designed for a variety of functions for students and faculty, as well as public gatherings. The space offers a broad learning stair for informal gathering and teaching. Technology is built into the space to support a wide range of presentation needs from small groups to large community presentations.

Chelsea now has a new interior courtyard that expands outdoor learning opportunities and provides additional recreational space for students with disabilities located in classrooms directly adjacent to the courtyard.

Chelsea's design prioritizes a wealth of natural light, which is supplemented by LED fixtures. The building incorporates biophilic design elements such as visual connections to the natural environment and the use of natural materials. Overall, the district's choice to reuse and reconfigure the existing building in lieu of a new building was an inherently sustainably minded decision.

Chelsea's new outdoor plaza offers bench seating outside and planters along the curved cafeteria curtainwall that also provides a barrier between the school and vehicle traffic. At the north end of the school site, displaced dirt from the construction process was used to form a natural safety, visual and acoustic barrier between the school and a heavily trafficked adjacent roadway. This serves the dual function of also forming a storm water detention basin and has become a local sledding hill providing a natural recreation option for the community.

## IEd109-02

Chelsea's main entry has been transformed with an expansive curving canopy and landscaped plaza area that also provides a visual connection to nature while also providing a natural protective barrier.





## IEd109-03

The design for Chelsea's transformation embraces the vision that the entire facility is a teaching tool, and maximizes connection with nature, including a double height glazed entry vestibule.





## IEd109-04

Preferred slide

Flexible extended learning areas for each grade level area are designed to accommodate two full classes with a focus on collaboration and project-based learning.





## IEd109-05

Preferred slide

Breakout areas, from small nooks to large learning areas, are designed with flexible furniture to accommodate various sized gatherings as well as solo time.





## IEd109-06

Light-filled classrooms cluster in color-branded grade level neighborhoods.





## IEd109-07

Dedicated shared use spaces such as music, media, arts and STEM are now co-located at the heart of the school in a central hub.





## IEd109-08

Chelsea's new Art and STEM rooms are shared use spaces with visual connection to the Media room and feature flexible furniture and durable materials that are easy to maintain.





## IEd109-09

Preferred slide

Chelsea's new cafeteria is designed for a variety of student, staff and public functions and offers a broad learning stair for informal gathering and teaching.





## IEd109-10

Extended learning areas are color branded by grade level and centrally located within grade level hubs. The open format encourages informal use as well as formal teaching activities.





## IEd109-11

Wide, light-filled corridors and open stairways facilitate accessible circulation and prioritize a visual connection to nature.





## IEd109-12

Branding and wayfinding is reinforced through a creative use of color. This builds a sense of community, identity and improves building navigation.





## IEd109-13

Extended learning areas prioritize biophilic design elements such as wood tone panels on the walls and ceiling as well as expansive natural light and visual connection to nature.





## IEd109-14

Spaces are provided throughout the school to promote informal learning and gathering, enhancing students' sense of ownership





## IEd109-15

Chelsea is surrounded by trees and open green space. The need to haul off soils displaced by construction was eliminated by creating a berm that forms a natural protective barrier.





# IEd109-16

Preferred slide

Chelsea Intermediate School has been transformed into an expansive, light-filled learning environment. The new plaza outside is welcoming and reinforces the feeling of transparency and connection with nature.

