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SUCCESS STORIES

HISTORIC SCHOOLS

MCDONALD HIGH SCHOOL MCDONALD, OHIO

In 1909, The Carnegie Steel Company bought land immediately north of Youngstown, Ohio for the purpose of creating a steel mill and an accompanying town for employees. By 1918, Carnegie Steel had created the town of McDonald. All houses were owned by the company and rented to employees. It was truly a 'company town'. However, Carnegie Steel found it difficult to attract workers with families, as the township's educational facilities were found lacking. And as local leadership refused to supply funds for improvement, Carnegie Steel built for the township new schools. McDonald High School opened in 1926 and has served the community since.

By the mid-1990's it became clear McDonald High School was in need of repair, consequently the school board hosted several public meetings concerning renovation. Additionally, it posted architectural plans, renderings, and renovation outlines at such frequented public places as the post office. Significant opposition to renovation never materialized, which school officials attribute to a favorable state/local funding ratio and the community's affection for the school.

In 1980, the McDonald Mill was significantly downsized and the town's residents have since suffered with the struggles of the American steel industry. But McDonald High School still stands. And within the school's walls remains steel created by the town's forefathers at the McDonald Mill. The renovation of McDonald High School ensures preservation of the town's past while also providing a state-of-the-art educational facility.



CONTACT INFORMATION AND PROJECT DETAILS

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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

School: McDonald High School

Address: 600 Iowa Avenue, McDonald, Ohio 44437

Enrollment: 387

Student/teacher ratio: 15.8

HISTORIC/RENOVATION RECORD

Original architect: Gilbert Miller

Date of construction: 1929

Date of renovation: Fall 1999

Previous renovations/additions: Though the school has not seen an extensive renovation, the district had previously completed technology improvements throughout the 1980s and 90s.

LOCATION

Historic District: No; though in 1999 the town was nominated for the National Register of Historic Places and the campaign for inclusion is ongoing.

Position within community: The school is a focal point of the community. Numerous community events are held within the building.

Busing: All students live within walking distance of the school but busing is made available.

COST

Total renovation cost: \$7,000,000

Funding sources: 88% state, 12% local

RENOVATION DESCRIPTION

State of school prior to renovation: A 1998 OSFC Facilities Assessment identified many renovation requirements. A significant portion of the roof and electrical systems needed replacement. Additionally, the school failed life safety and ADA requirements. The assessment estimated the total cost of repairs at roughly \$8 million.

Description of renovation process: During renovation, the district housed students in a vacant community church within walking distance of the high school. The cost of which totaled \$23,000, a fraction of the cost of renting modular units. The school's population was rotated by thirds into the church to allow for renovation of the High school in sections. Though the OSFC contested the use of the church, as it traditionally instructs districts to rent modular units, the district continued despite the opposition.

RENOVATION SUCCESSES

Mechanical/HVAC: The school was equipped with new heating and air conditioning systems.

Electrical: The renovation included the installation of a new electrical system.

Disabilities Act compliance: The school obtained a state-waiver for ADA compliance to avoid installation of an elevator. Thus, the school's third floor, which has four classrooms, is not handicap-accessible.

Technology integration: All classrooms, administrator offices, and a Media Center offer Internet access. Additionally, the school possesses an interactive distance-learning classroom.

Adaptation to educational needs: The renovation included a major structural reconfiguration to provide for larger classrooms. New science labs, administrative space, art and music rooms, and a student commons were created.

Safety compliance: Much of the school contained asbestos and \$.5 million, the most expensive aspect of the renovation, was spent on abatement.

Other/unique renovation successes: The school's restoration is unique in that architectural details were well preserved. McDonald High School's hallways exhibit decorative ceilings with distinctive color patterns, ceramic tile floors, and historic woodwork. Furthermore, the school's indoor ceramic pool, located in the basement has been well preserved.