

## Athol Community Elementary School

### Athol, MA

For a number of years, the Town of Athol, a New England mill town, was seeking to improve its three aging elementary schools. After a thorough study of multiple options, the preferred option consolidated all district elementary students into a single new school serving 615 students in grades PreK thru 4. Building a new school produced a unique opportunity to realize the potential public schools have in providing enrichment programs that benefit, students, families and the greater community by enabling community access to shared amenities. Looking back at the model of "neighborhood" schools which were an essential part of every New England mill town, there was a sense of comfort and community in the smaller learning environments they offered. Critical to the success of this project was maintaining that sense by finding a cost-effective fit for students, families and administrators, while creating a refreshing learning environment appropriate for fostering student and community engagement in learning. The exterior design is meant to celebrate Athol's renewed commitment to education by using architectural iconography that



reflects the stature of public schools as important civic institutions.

The interior was designed with flexibility in mind, with spatial relationships and technology centered on 21st-century learning. Academic spaces of various sizes are adaptable to a range of educational uses. The structural grid of the school enables an easy modifications of spaces to meet possible changing needs in the future. From a technology perspective, wireless communication is provided though the building and computer access is hardwired where appropriate.



This new school affords the elementary aged children of Athol a facility that rivals surrounding

districts and provides abundant natural lighting, better air circulation in a high-efficiency building, all of which are conducive to improved learning.

### Project in Progress

#### School prototype plan

#### Mount Vernon Group Architects, Inc.

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#### DESIGN TEAM

Frank Tedesco, AIA, Principal-in-Charge  
 Dennis Daly, AIA, Design Principal  
 Luis Ascensao, Project Manager  
 Susan Taylor, NCIDQ, Interior Design  
 Rafal Toczko, AIA  
 Chris LeBlanc

#### OWNER/CLIENT

Athol-Royalston Regional School District  
 Athol, MA  
 Anthony Polita, Superintendent  
 978/249-2400

#### KEY STATS

Grades Served: PreK-4  
 Capacity: 615  
 Size of Site: 94.91 acres  
 Building Area: 95,726 sq. ft.  
 Space per Student: 155 sq. ft.  
 Cost per Student: \$51,373  
 Square Foot Cost: \$330  
 Project Cost: \$43,932,000  
 Completion Date: August 2016  
 Sustainability Rating Status: Sustainability rating used is 2009 MA-CHPS

DIGITAL RENDERINGS: MOUNT VERNON GROUP ARCHITECTS, INC.

