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Renovated Milby High School Opens with Overwhelming Community Excitement

***Kirksey Architecture designed history to meet 21st century learning
at this historic high school***

HOUSTON, TEXAS – Milby High School, one of Houston ISD's oldest schools, held a grand opening to celebrate its newly renovated campus on Thursday, August 17 with almost 3,000 in attendance. The new campus design, located at 1601 Broadway Street, brings modern updates and state-of-the-art technology to a significantly historic school, originally built in 1926. Carefully renovated by Kirksey Architecture's PK-12 Education Team, the design paid attention to every detail to ensure that Milby's history was thoughtfully captured.

The school, part of HISD's 2012 bond program, is a one, two and three-story building. The design retains the 1926 historically significant structure as the "heart of the school," and wraps 240,000 square feet of new construction around a central courtyard.

Designed to accommodate 2,000 students, the floorplan features new academic wings on both the north and south sides of the main historic building, careful to preserve and update the original 1926 central structure. Home to a petroleum engineering magnet program, the school includes eight career and technical education (CTE) areas, engineering, welding, and HVAC labs, a culinary arts program with a student-run café, a cosmetology program, and a print shop. Allowing the students to practice in a realistic environment was key for the design at Milby. The school also includes a 500 seat auditorium, with a scene fabrication shop which is the home for the theatre arts program. The black box theatre houses the dance program, making the school an ideal venue for the performing arts in this part of the district.

During the demolition process, it became clear that nearly every type of construction possible was used during the past nine decades. Renovation after renovation had been performed on the school, but never one as extensively as this most recent undertaking. The act of preserving Milby while bringing it into the modern era brought with it a unique set of renovation challenges and creative solutions.

The design works in key details representative of the school's history and significance in the community. Sections of the gym floor from the 1930s were repurposed as part of a social gathering stair in the main dining area, and the center court logo now hangs in the main lobby of the new gymnasium. Old slate boards were salvaged and reframed for use in the extended learning areas, and much of the existing plaster work was restored to showcase the fine crown molding visible in the dining commons.

The entire design and construction process was a collaborative effort, fueled by the team's dedication and the community's passion for their school. With almost a century of history to preserve and honor, the Kirksey team led a committed effort to design the best possible solution for both the students, administration and community. As a result, the school will enjoy a modern facility that will offer a 21st century education for another 100 years.

Kirksey is a Houston-based, sustainable architecture and interior design firm with more than 33 million sf of LEED® projects in their portfolio. Team-based in structure, Kirksey serves Commercial, Collegiate, Community, pK-12, Government, Healthcare, Hospitality, Religious, Science & Technology, and Multi-Family Residential markets.

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