



## **Stalco and BBS break ground on \$14.1 million Riverhead Charter School; Team members include SCC, DeLuxe Building and PW Grosser**

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Ground has been broken on the new Riverhead Charter School (RCS) at 3685 Middle Country Rd. Three hundred students, local community leaders, the school faculty, and the design and construction team members celebrated the beginning of construction of the new building for the only K-8 charter school in NYS' Suffolk County. "Today's ceremony marks the beginning of a new chapter in our school's history. The program expansion and rapidly growing enrollment that generated the need for the new home for our school are the testimony to the parents' trust in our dedication to quality education for all children of the eastern L.I. community," said RCS principal and executive director Raymond Ankrum.

Project team members for the \$14.1 million school include Stalco Construction, general contractor; BBS Architects, Landscape Architects and Engineers, which is serving as the project's architect, interior designer, and mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) engineer; SCC Construction Management Group, construction manager; DeLuxe Building Systems, modular component fabricator and installer; and PW Grosser Consulting, civil engineer.

The project is the result of increasing enrollment and expansion of the school's program from K-6 to K-8. RCS' current enrollment is 300 students. The new building could accommodate more than 500 students. Established in 2001, RCS is a non-tuition public school of choice and serves families from 14 school districts. The new school is financed through a \$21 million bond. RCS is one of a very few charter schools in NYS and the U.S. to receive an investment grade rating.

"The new, 50,000 s/f school will include a two-story classroom wing with 16 classrooms, an auditorium/gymnasium, a library, an administration wing, and a kitchen wing," said Stalco principal Kevin Harney.

The 5.8-acre site currently houses two conventional, pre-existing buildings and modular classrooms. During construction, these three structures will remain occupied. Once construction is completed, the modular classroom section will be demolished and the two existing conventional buildings will be converted into storage and miscellaneous use space.

According to BBS Principal Architect, Roger P. Smith, AIA, LEED AP, "During the pre-design phase of the project, and in consultation with the client, a hybrid building design was chosen. The new school will consist of an innovative combination of a conventional building section and a modular pre-fabricated section."

Continuing, he explained that "the conventional section will include a combination gymnasium/auditorium/cafeteria and stage. The large span of this space called for a traditional steel frame design. The other areas that will be built conventionally include special architectural elements, such as the main entrance atrium and the library reading area, both with large expanses of windows.

All of the remaining sections will be modular."

"The new school's design achieves the perfect balance between the maximum amount of space, architectural quality, and the available budget," added BBS' Karalisa R. Grundner, AIA, LEED AP.

According to Will Recce, SCC principal, "Logistical challenges include meeting the established budget and a Winter 2014/15 scheduled completion date. Other challenges include coordination of two differing construction methods, conventional and modular, in order to create a cohesive building, as well as building a new facility on a tight site containing an occupied, fully operational school."

In addition, he noted, unlike public schools in New York State, the charter school did not require permits from the New York State Department of Education. However, it did require local municipal permits from the town of Riverhead and New York Department of State permits for the modular construction."

#### Design and Construction

Included in the scope of project is redevelopment of the entire site; construction of a large drop-off/pickup loop wrapped around the new building with separate drop-off/pickup areas for buses and passenger cars; and a new asphalt access roadway. The drop-off/pickup loop also serves as a fire access road.

The site will feature a general play area with natural grass and additional landscaping throughout, including tree plantings and standing ornamental lampposts. Site engineering work will consist of a 110-stall surface parking lot and a new self-contained drainage system that will include catch basins. The site's new grading design will direct water to the catch basins. The site work will also incorporate an on-site sanitation system.

The hybrid character of the new school requires a dual foundation that will consist of slab-on-grade beneath the gymnasium, stage, and other conventionally-built sections; and crawl space foundations beneath the modular section for the main classroom wings, administrative wing, and kitchen wing, to access the utilities. The conventional section will feature a steel-framed structure and masonry walls. The modular sections will feature pre-manufactured steel frames with inlaid concrete floor panels, C-channel floor joists, steel stud wall framing, and a metal deck roof.

The two-story school will feature full-height glass and aluminum storefronts at the main entrance and library reading area; reeded textured glass for architectural impact at the upper part of the storefront entrance; low-e aluminum-framed, bronze-tinted sliding glass windows; an exterior earth-tone color scheme; and an EIFS synthetic stucco finish with R-20 foam insulation. The entire building will feature a rusticated, split-face concrete block base in earth tones. The base will extend from the ground level to the first floor window sills, and in some areas all the way to the roof to serve as an architectural accent.

The interior program calls for a 22,700 s/f, two-story floor classroom wing to contain 18 classrooms, including two 969 sq. ft. kindergarten rooms and 790 s/f classrooms for grades 1-8. The structure will also house a 5,740 s/f multi-use auditorium; a 1,200 s/f library; a 250 s/f music room and art and science rooms; an 8,686 s/f, two-story administration wing with offices, a 270 s/f conference room, and faculty lounges; and a kitchen wing.

The facility's design follows New York State Department of Education spatial design guidelines, even though it is not specifically required to do so as a charter school. This allows for larger, more flexible space that will support the intended educational program.

Interior finishes will consist of painted drywall and concrete walls; acoustical tile ceilings, and a combination of carpet tile and vinyl composition tile floors.

The existing school facilities do not include a gymnasium. The new gymnasium/multi-functional space will feature a dividing curtain in its center, allowing it to serve various functions simultaneously. The space will feature a full kitchen at one end and a 1,200 sq. ft. stage at the other end. The section adjacent to the kitchen will also function as a cafeteria. Furthermore, the gymnasium will contain a middle school-sized basketball court. The space will feature a synthetic floor system and a folding 150-seat bleacher.

Common areas between the classrooms are one of the project's most interesting interior design elements. Instead of using standard double-loaded corridors, there are common areas - a client requirement - that will serve both as general gathering areas and additional educational space. The common areas are designed as widened hallways, and are almost as wide as the classrooms themselves. The walls between the classrooms and commons area will feature internal vision panels that will allow more natural light into internal spaces.

According to DeLuxe Vice President John Erb, "The pre-fabricated sections of the school will consist of classroom, hallway, and office modules, which will be manufactured at the firm's plant in Berwick, PA, and then delivered by trucks to the construction site. The modules will be 11 feet high, 14 feet wide, and vary in length from 30 to 50 feet."

The modules will feature structural steel frames and concrete floor panels, and will arrive already equipped with light-gauge steel framed partition walls, plumbing systems, electrical wiring and lighting fixtures, custom selected millwork, and windows. The exterior walls will feature weatherproof membranes, which will later receive finishes specified for the entire school building. Upon installation, the modules will be structurally welded with stitch plates.

The interest in the Riverhead Charter School has always been high. In fact, the school had to hold a lottery for admissions. With the new school and a program that will expand the school's offers from K-6 to K-8, with the growing enrollment, and the fact that the Riverhead Charter School is the only K-8 school in Suffolk County, parental interest will only increase.