

CASE STUDY

BRENTWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Restoring and Invigorating a Neighborhood Gem



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”

—John Bryant, AIA, LEED AP
Sweet Sparkman

INTRODUCTION

In 2017, the School Board of Sarasota County, Florida, chose Sweet Sparkman Architecture and Interiors to make much needed improvements to Brentwood Elementary School, a 60-year-old complex nestled in the midst of single-family homes. Decades after its opening, the school facilities were outdated, and Brentwood was losing students to charter schools and other educational venues.

The scope of work included replacement of an undersized/over-utilized cafeteria, which was at the end of its service life and presented inadequate performance/presentation space for the school and community groups. Also required were HVAC equipment upgrades, media center and classroom renovations and campus beautification, which included more than an acre of site area modifications, such as service drives, playgrounds and landscaping to create a new “front door” to the school.

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Improve the learning environment
- ▶ Transform the face of the campus
- ▶ Create maximum impact with a limited budget
- ▶ Respect and acknowledge the history of the school
- ▶ Foster neighborhood pride in, and use of, the campus
- ▶ Enhance campus security
- ▶ Increase efficiency of campus

CASE STUDY

Project Budget and Schedule

Construction Budget:
\$13,200,000

Design Schedule:
9 Months

Construction Schedule:
30 months

“
Families are proud when they walk in the new cafeteria. They feel it is not only new, but bold, modern, a standout in the district. It makes them proud to call it theirs.
”

—John Weida, *Principal*
Brentwood Elementary School

CHALLENGES

For Sweet Sparkman, which has deep experience in design of educational facilities, the issue at hand was familiar – how to economically modernize public buildings with aged equipment and facilities and outdated aesthetics. An additional challenge for the architectural firm and Jon F. Swift Construction was the need to create a full temporary cafeteria while the original was demolished to make way for the new cafeteria.

Upgrades to the school's outdated media center also presented challenges, including acoustic and layout issues due to demountable partitions, as well as access and security issues.

RESULTS

Integrating design expertise with sound, yet economical, material choices, Sweet Sparkman delivered a whole new experience for the nearly 700-pupil school and the surrounding community in a project that was on time, on budget.

Today, the campus is a standout in the district and pupils and families are making good use of the new and updated facilities. In addition, enrollment projection numbers are up and the school recently earned an “A” rating from the state.

“It was a lot to do,” said Sweet Sparkman project manager John Bryant, AIA, LEED AP, “but we tapped into our strengths of thorough design research, evaluation of options and understanding of costs to come up with design solutions that gave the school district ‘the biggest bang for the buck,’ meeting design challenges with creative use of materials and color.”