



# SORAYA HAFEZ SCHOOL

by LAURIE JONES



Excitement for opening day at the Soraya Hafez School in Edmonton, Alberta, has everyone involved counting down the days. Completed months ahead of schedule and under budget, the Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) team is more than proud of their accomplishment. The school's namesake, Soraya Hafez, taught in the Arabic Bilingual program at Edmonton Public Schools in 1983, and served as president of the Edmonton chapter of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women.

Built to LEED Silver specifications, the two-storey school is organized around learning communities that can be configured in multiple ways for the kindergarten to grade six student population, and can be adaptable to the pedagogy of the curriculum.

"It was important for us to align the design of the school with the way children learn today in the 21st-century model," says Terri Gosine, director of project management for the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB). "Classes are more collaborative and flexible. We need to give students and teachers an opportunity to work in various ways, from independently to large groups."

Gosine adds one of the goals when they started the project was to have a "you've got to see this" wow factor in many areas of the building. "When we do tours, we like to showcase things

that are unique and different, including the learning stairs – a stairway in the middle of the school that is used during large gatherings. The students can also sit on the steps for learning, doing plays, and presentations because the area has a lot of natural light. We even used it to do presentations to the construction team."

The design also included aspects that were focused on the children, such as having windows that are low to the ground for children to look out. "We've incorporated sinks that are at the right height so several children can be washing their hands or doing art projects at the same time," she says.

In the learning commons there are toys built into the wall such as talking tubes and little doors to open so teachers can put items in for matching games or exploring. Whiteboard walls have been built into a number of areas so small groups can sit in front of them and draw or learn.

Eddo Cancian, principal at ACI Architects Inc., says throughout the IPD process the design, build, and ownership teams were at the same table. "The entire spectrum of the design approach was done concurrently. This way the conditions of the project became the conditions of success or satisfaction rather than each person's scope. There were consistent validations, almost weekly."

Each learning community – which includes between four and six classrooms – surrounds their own commons space. These are in turn attached to the main school commons. Throughout the areas, an abundance of natural light is available through clerestory and glazing. To address both sustainability and budget, in-floor heating was installed.

Cancian adds solar panels on the roof are connected to a dashboard so students can understand when and how the panels are operating, and the effectiveness of the panels at any given time of day. "We don't have an ability to store the energy, but once collected and identified in terms of quantity, it can be sold back to the grid."

Number TEN Architectural Group was brought onto the Soraya Hafez School IPD team as thought-leaders in the design of 21st-century learning environments. "We led the development of the final school site and building plans, as well as the exterior architectural expression," says Taylor Hammond, intern architect.

Trevor Loughridge, project manager, Delnor Construction Ltd., says breakout rooms were designed to be open so students can focus on a task at hand but still be involved in the group as a whole. "Some areas will be used as a reading corner or meeting corner for the children. For the outside, in

addition to play areas being designed into the footprint of the school, the facility backs onto a public area for the city of Edmonton."

He adds the IPD process has left everyone inspired to continue building schools. "The Edmonton Public School Board is really a leader in this. It's thrilling to see someone embrace change in the construction industry." **A**

## LOCATION

980 McConachie Boulevard NW, Edmonton, Alberta

## OWNER/DEVELOPER

Edmonton Public School Board

## ARCHITECTS

Number TEN Architectural Group / ACI Architects Inc.

## GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Delnor Construction Ltd.

## STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT

RJC Engineers

## MECHANICAL CONSULTANT

Arrow Engineering Inc.

## ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT

SMP Engineering

## CIVIL CONSULTANT

Al-Terra Engineering Ltd.

## LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Design North Landscape Architecture Inc.

## TOTAL SIZE

58,910 square feet

## TOTAL COST

\$19 million