

Buffalo Public Schools and UB Announce New Architecture and Design Academy; LPCiminelli unveils the Discover Design Architecture Program

Buffalo Public Schools, in collaboration with UB, School of Architecture and Planning, the American Institute of Architects and LPCiminelli celebrated a grand opening on Oct. 12 for the new Architecture and Design Academy at the International Preparatory School at Grover and the unveiling of the new LPCiminelli's Construction Connections "Discover Design" Architecture Program.

Remarks from speakers include BPS Superintendent, Dr. James A. Williams; UB School of Architecture and Planning, Dean Brian Carter; International Preparatory School at Grover Principal, Kevin Eberle; Kelly Hayes McAlonie, VP Public Advocacy AIA New York State, LPCiminelli Executive Vice President, Gene Partridge; and AIA Buffalo Chapter President Elect and BPS Architect, Paul McDonnell.

The celebration kicked off a series of architecture-related events in Buffalo. Activities included a tour of the new academy and the reading of an announcement from the office of Mayor Byron Brown proclaiming Oct. 11-17 "Architecture Week" in the City of Buffalo. From Oct. 14-16, Buffalo will be hosting the joint 2010 convention of the American Institute of Architects New York State and the New York Upstate Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Superintendent of Buffalo Public Schools Dr. James A. Williams says, "I think it's fitting that the Architecture and Design Academy is housed in Grover on Buffalo's West Side, where there are so many unique and historic buildings, including the school itself. This is another example of our students partnering with the community – in this case, the University at Buffalo, the American Institute of Architects and LPCiminelli – for this very special learning opportunity."

The mission of the Architecture and Design Academy, which launched this semester with a 9th grade class of 20 students, is to engender architecture and design literacy and academic excellence through a rigorous curriculum in an effort to prepare students for higher education so they can compete in a global society. The innovative education program, which aims to prepare students for college, is an integral new part of Buffalo's P-16 pipeline. Through the academy, students in grades 9 – 12 will receive a liberal arts education while developing skills in fine and graphic arts that include drawing from observation and modeling.

"The academy is really a vehicle to prepare students in Buffalo for a university education," said Kelly Hayes McAlonie, associate director of UB's Capital Planning Group and vice president for public advocacy of the American Institute of Architects New York State. "The focus is on helping students reach college, and to attend architecture school."

The need for a diverse pool of architects was identified through the \$1.45 billion Buffalo Public Schools Renovation Program. Serving as the Program Manager, LPCiminelli recognized the need and worked to develop an architectural curriculum enrichment program. "Discover Design" is based on three main goals: awareness, attraction and retention. By encouraging greater awareness during secondary education, it gives students an opportunity to be exposed to a career path that they may not have previously considered.

"The creation of mentoring, internships and co-op positions may attract students who realized that in today's job market a degree is just a starting point. The goal of the program is to encourage immersion in the workforce and foster network experiences to retain a highly talented local group of individuals" said Gene Partridge, Executive Vice President of LPCiminelli.

The Architecture and Design Academy is the product of a collaboration between Buffalo Public Schools, UB, LPCiminelli, and the American Institute of Architects Buffalo/WNY Chapter.