



BRANDED ENVIRONMENTS

DEFINING THE RESTRUCTURED HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS

By Brad Gunton & Adam Rubin



BRANDED ENVIRONMENT

**DEFINING THE RESTRUCTURED
HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS**

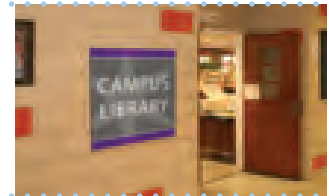
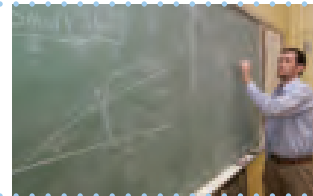
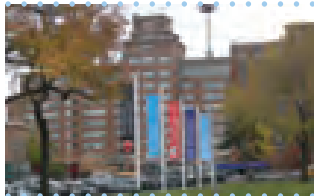
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 **Visual branding on the web: when you see the globe icon, visit www.newvisions.org for more information and examples.**





Visual Branding in School



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In cities across the country, educators and civic leaders are taking on the challenge of transforming large, failing high schools where graduation rates have remained below 50 percent for many years. They are replacing these high schools with small schools that will prepare students in underserved urban communities to meet the high standards needed to be successful in college and beyond. Lacking the resources to build new structures, cities are locating many of these new, small high schools in the buildings of the large high schools they are replacing, forming campuses of small autonomous schools.

In New York City, Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the Department of Education have created nearly 200 small high schools in an aggressive effort to improve the city's graduation rates. As part of this effort, New Visions for Public Schools has led the New Century High Schools Initiative and created more than 80 of these schools in the city's highest need neighborhoods. With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, and the Open Society Institute and the involvement of more than 225 community partners, New Century High Schools connect resources from museums, the arts, universities, and community organizations to create vibrant new approaches to teaching and learning.

By 2007, these New Century High Schools will be serving students in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens. Seventy-two percent of these small schools are located within a campus building shared by three or more schools. More than 90 percent of these schools share a building with at least one other school.

The siting of these schools raises significant questions. How can facilities built to educate large numbers of students in a single school be reconfigured as homes for several small schools? How can a campus building respond to the unique missions and curricula of the schools they house? If the



nationwide shift toward small schools is to succeed, school buildings themselves must be re-imagined.

Visual branding offers one solution. In the advertising world, “branding” improves a product’s marketability by helping it stand out from others in its field and by appealing to consumers’ aesthetic sensibilities. Visually branding a school means using visual cues and treatments to identify, demarcate, and/or unify disparate spaces within a large campus building.

This pamphlet describes the visual branding process piloted on 16 campuses in New York City. In collaboration with the New York City Department of Education, the School Construction Authority (SCA), and the many stakeholders involved in these schools, New Visions and its partner Print International conceptualized, refined, and implemented the visual branding system. It is our belief that this process can change the way school communities use space, helping to establish a new context for collaborative communities and student achievement.



By 2007,

90 New Century High Schools

will be serving students across the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens. All but seven are already open.

72% of these small schools are located within a campus building shared by three or more schools.

Over
90%

of these schools share a building with at least one other school.

Why Visual Branding?

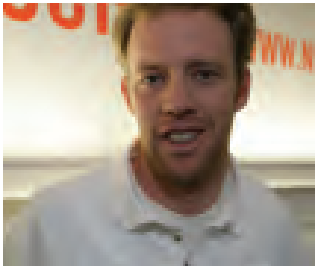
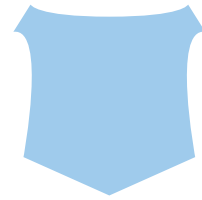
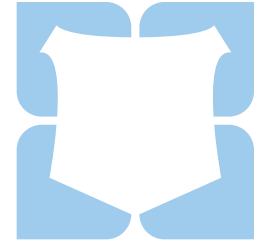
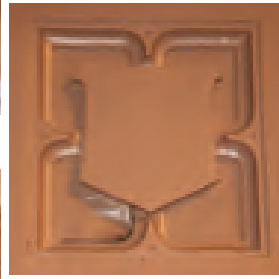
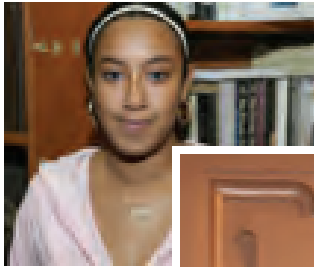
To create a school identity. New Century High Schools aim to create a sense of intimacy and identity for staff and students. A school's color scheme and signage help create this intimacy through a sense of belonging while reinforcing a school's identity. Applied throughout a large building, a consistent, color-based system of signs and symbols—a branded identity—serves to differentiate each school's space and also serves as a map which lays out the pathways, boundaries, and shared spaces for the entire campus community.

To preserve the building's legacy. In cases where the large school is being phased out, the original school's name and colors can become the campus name and colors, presenting a familiar public face for athletic teams, performance groups, and other campus/community activities. A campus color and design scheme thus preserves the legacy of the large school within the community in a respectful and politically sensitive manner.

To build collaboration. For administrators grappling with the challenges of sharing space, the process of developing a visual branding system can be a vehicle for positive collaboration that benefits each individual school within the campus community.



Proposed for future installation



Visual Branding: A Guide to the Transformation Process

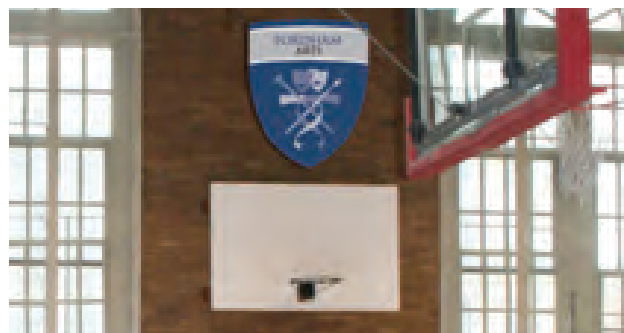
Ideally, visual branding occurs after final school boundaries are established within the context of comprehensive space planning. The master planning process is fully described in a companion document to this pamphlet, called *From Large Schools to Small School Campuses: Orchestrating the Shift*. Visual branding is most effective when the master planning process has determined, at least in part, each school's permanent location.

The visual branding process extends over a six- to nine-month period and has four key phases:

- Participatory design with multiple stakeholders on the campus;
- Fabrication and installation of system elements;
- Celebration for the campus community, where parents, civic leaders, and the broader community are invited to the school and introduced to the new campus;
- Evaluation and reporting on the impact of the branding process and its implementation.

Project Team

All stakeholders should have a voice in the visual branding process. In order to avoid perceived bias in the decision-making process, a neutral facilitator—the intermediary—should serve as the project manager.



Theodore Roosevelt Educational Campus



South Bronx Campus

Visual Branding Process



Phase I: Participatory Design

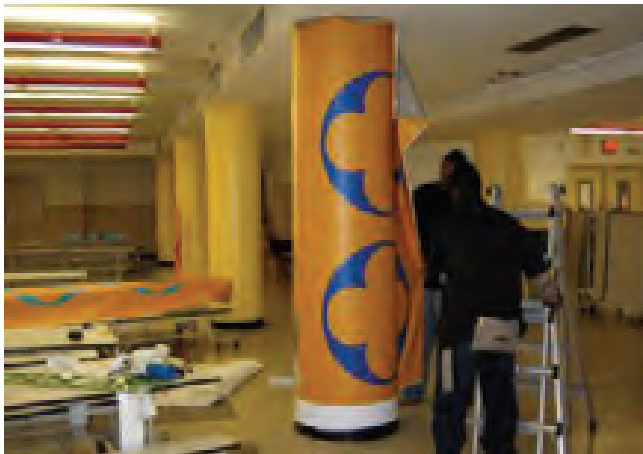
Community involvement is vital to the legitimacy and relevance of any public design project. Visual branding is no exception. Involving the entire campus community in a participatory design process ensures that the “essence” of each school—theme, culture, demographics, and traditions—will ultimately determine the colors and symbols used to represent them and the campus as a whole.

This participatory design stage occurs over two to three months and involves in-depth consultation with school leaders, teachers, parents, students, and community partners. It begins with a kick-off event that engages the school community in a dialogue about visual branding. Surveys distributed by the facilitator explore each school’s identity and relationship to the campus building. 🌐

Based on the needs and school cultures articulated at this first meeting, the branding design team develops a scheme of colors, shapes, symbols, and typefaces for each school and the overall campus. On their next visit to the campus, they present their initial ideas and gather feedback from project team members at each school.

Once revisions are incorporated into the branding, the design team incorporates the feedback into a strategy for using the colors, shapes, symbols, and typefaces throughout the campus building. The design team presents this to the campus community to assess the implementation plan and finalize any campus-wide design decisions. The design team then makes its final recommendations to all of the campus stakeholders, who must reach consensus on the treatments for common areas and the building’s exterior, as well as each school’s corridors and/or floors.





Phase II: Fabrication & Installation

Finding appropriate vendors helps to facilitate the fabrication and installation process. The visual branding work in New York engaged two types of vendors—one that installed flagpoles and one that created and installed all other elements of the system. The vendors were involved in creating the signage and identifying the specifications for each sign, as well as suggesting materials that would stand up to potential damage by weather or vandals. The process also involved an architect who worked with the vendors to develop a design schematic for each building that provided locations and installation instructions for the entire implementation plan.



The **Morris High School Campus**, the oldest high school in the Bronx, used their event to celebrate the large school's history while ushering in a new era of a small schools campus. Alumni invoked the Morris High School tradition and new school leaders spoke of honoring the past while striving for academic excellence. Student performances and speeches showcased small schools on the campus. This celebration also provided an opportunity to launch the new Morris High School Museum within the building to honor Morris's history for new generations of campus students and to provide tangible partnerships between the small schools and a broader Bronx community. 🌐



At **Evander Childs Campus**, the campus celebration represented the first opportunity for all seven of the schools sharing the building to celebrate publicly both their collaboration and the building transformation. All of the principals shared the stage, while students from each small school demonstrated their talents through a variety of performance pieces, ranging from music and dance to a robotics demonstration. The event began with the color guard from Bronx Aerospace Academy marching in with flags from all of the schools, providing the backdrop for the program. This celebration served to inspire additional collaborations across the small schools: the first campus-wide talent show was staged a few months after the celebration.

Phase III: Celebration

An event planned collaboratively by all campus principals to coincide with the end of the branding process showcases a transformed campus and reintroduces it to students, civic leaders, parents, and community partners. The celebration can occur as part of an athletic or performance event on campus or be a stand-alone ribbon cutting ceremony. There are as many ways to celebrate as there are schools.

“After the branding, it felt good to walk around our school because everything was in place, in order, and each school got its own identity.”

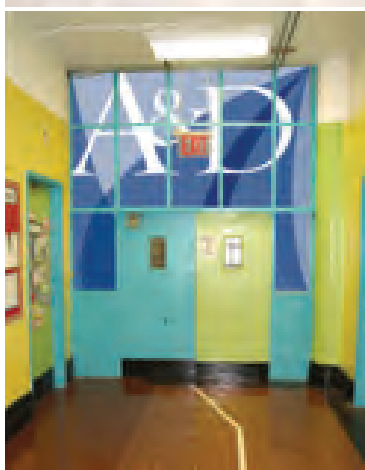
—11th grade student at
New Explorers High School

Phase IV: Results and Evaluation

The final component of any successful visual branding program is an evaluation of its impact on the faculty and students of the building based on the original goals articulated by the stakeholders for each building. For example, short-term goals may focus on addressing the challenges posed by multiple schools sharing a single building; longer-term goals might include fostering collaborations among the schools on the campus or developing deeper community involvement with the schools.

New Visions conducted both qualitative and quantitative evaluations of its visual branding projects. Post-implementation conversations with principals, staff, and students focused on how the system differentiated the schools, affected life on the campus, and made the building more attractive. Has the branding catalyzed other collaborations among principals, teachers, students, or community partners? Does the community perceive the school building differently as a result of the branding process? 🌐

Visual Branding: The Components on the Campus



Proposed for future installation

As a building-wide initiative, branding work is most effective when fully implemented. Since budget constraints, changes in space allocation over time, and other variables can affect a campus's ability to carry out a comprehensive branding project, the following system may be used as a menu of options for transforming a campus.

While certain items on this menu are more essential than others, most may be added as the process or budget allows. The style components of the system design include colors, typeface, symbols, and shapes. Signage components include banners, directories, room signs, shields, lettering, and paint. Budget permitting, floor treatments and lighting are additional ways to strengthen the impact of branding on a campus.

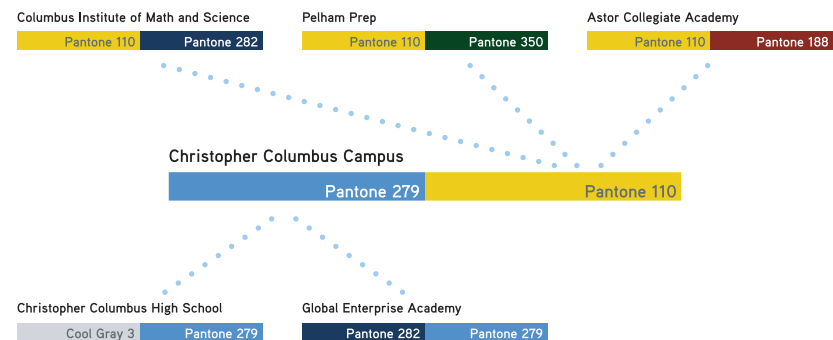
Style

Colors

A simple way to enhance visual coherence is to use a two-color scheme for individual schools and for the overall campus. Each individual school chooses one of the two campus colors and one additional color with which they identify, ensuring a visual linkage between schools throughout the campus.

If any school on a campus already has a color scheme that clashes with the campus colors, a creative solution is required. At Stevenson Campus, for instance, the historic campus purple did not match the colors the small schools had already chosen to represent them. Instead, each school incorporated one of purple's component colors: blue or red.

Pantone 2603	CMYK 69 95 6 1
Pantone 431	CMYK 57 40 38 26
Pantone 200	CMYK 11 93 69 2
Pantone 107	CMYK 2 4 80 0
Pantone 363	CMYK 75 16 98 4
Pantone 2767	CMYK 96 86 35 29
Pantone 072	CMYK 96 89 5 1
Pantone 300	CMYK 96 44 4 1
Pantone 1505	CMYK 2 42 77 0
Black	CMYK 0 0 0 100







Typeface

Typeface and font are powerful tools for reinforcing concepts and conveying character. The design team develops options for typeface and font for each school and for the campus building based on individual meetings with the school teams.

Typeface can give a branding system a modern or traditional look. At Prospect Heights Campus, for example, a typeface similar to the engraving on the front of the building was selected to link the signage with the architecture.



VAN ARSDALE CAMPUS

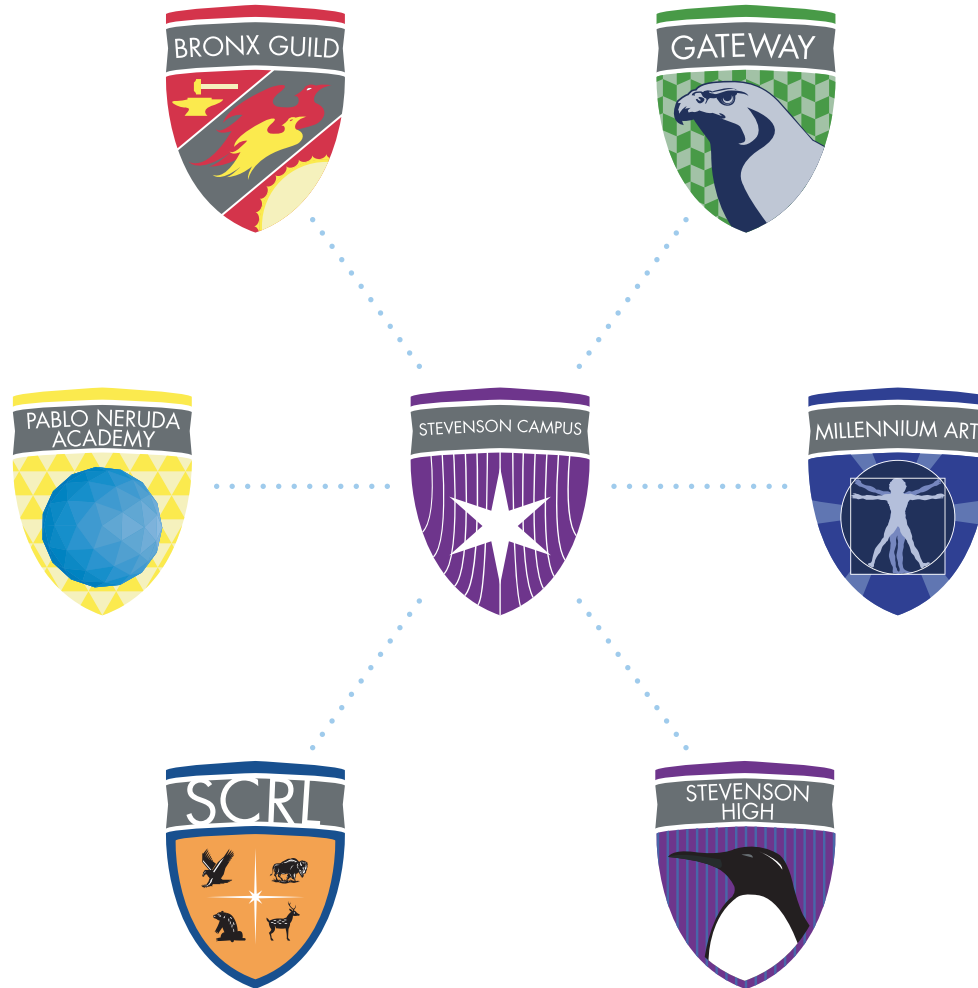
Columbus Campus

Stevenson Campus

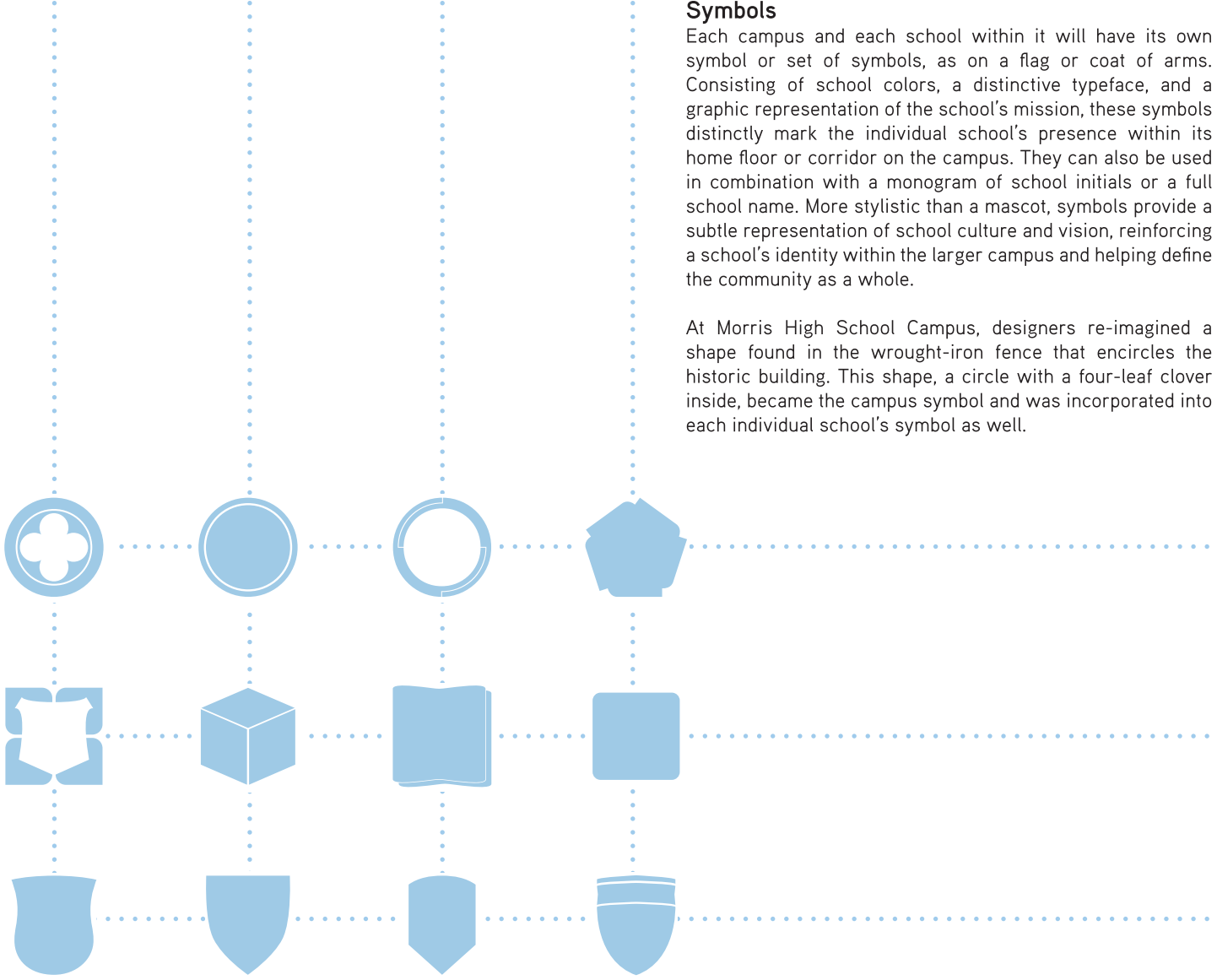
Prospect Heights Campus

Park West Campus

Erasmus Hall Campus



In this illustration, the campus typeface is repeated in each school's symbol, reinforcing campus unity while maintaining the unique identities of the individual schools.



Symbols

Each campus and each school within it will have its own symbol or set of symbols, as on a flag or coat of arms. Consisting of school colors, a distinctive typeface, and a graphic representation of the school's mission, these symbols distinctly mark the individual school's presence within its home floor or corridor on the campus. They can also be used in combination with a monogram of school initials or a full school name. More stylistic than a mascot, symbols provide a subtle representation of school culture and vision, reinforcing a school's identity within the larger campus and helping define the community as a whole.

At Morris High School Campus, designers re-imagined a shape found in the wrought-iron fence that encircles the historic building. This shape, a circle with a four-leaf clover inside, became the campus symbol and was incorporated into each individual school's symbol as well.





Exterior Signage

Banners

Both ceremonial and celebratory, large double-sided banners bearing the campus and school names declare to the community that a shift has occurred inside the high school building. Whether hung directly from the façade on poles mounted into the building or raised on a nearby flagpole, the banners raise awareness of a campus in the community.

Building Lettering

The main entrance sends the first and most powerful message to people entering the school. On the exterior of the building, the names of the campus and each individual school should be featured using metal or brass-plate lettering, which often involves replacing existing large-scale lettering. The campus name should be first and most prominently displayed; if space allows, the names of all of the schools in the building should also appear to formally signify their presence.

Additional Exterior Signage

Additional campus name signage can appear on various façades of the building, especially on secondary entrances within view of surrounding streets. Signage may include smaller banners, shields, lettering, or some combination of these. Additional signage reinforces the campus concept, as well as signifying individual small school entrances as needed.

Setting aside space for an external directory, either on the façade of the building or on a freestanding post, is another way to employ signage. Such a directory might simply list the schools in the building, or it might provide additional information, such as floor numbers or the names of the schools' principals.

The main entrance sends the **first and most powerful message to people** entering the school.

Interior Signage

Shields on Entrance Foyer Walls

The entrance foyer provides another opportunity to introduce visitors and school community members to the small schools in the building. Large-scale symbols such as school shields can be hung inside each campus entrance. If individual schools have dedicated entrances, they can display their schools' signage there, while all the schools on campus are featured in the main entrance. If there is no wall space for shields, school or campus banners may be hung from the ceiling, between pillars, or on the wall.

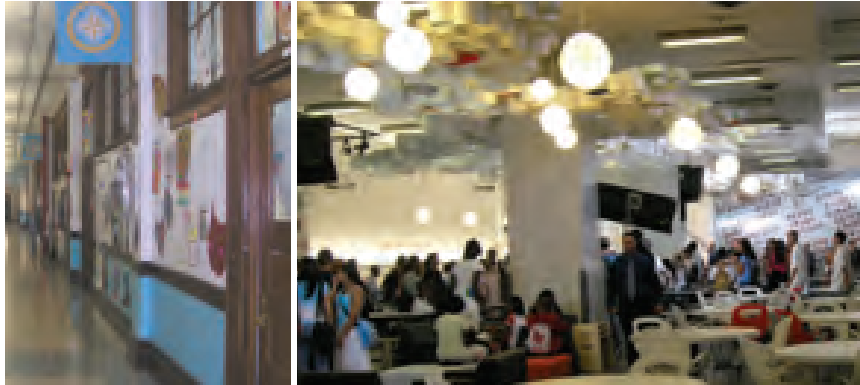
Internal Banners

Vinyl banners with each school's full name and symbol can be hung in prominent places (out of student reach), such as the cafeteria, above staircases, or in the auditorium, serving as a continual reminder of the campus's multiple occupants. Internal banners also reinforce the concept of shared space that belongs to all of the schools, not only to the largest school on the campus.

Shared Spaces

Among the many unique features of a campus are its numerous shared spaces. Sharing spaces such as the cafeteria, auditorium, gymnasium, library, or health clinic can be challenging, but is an excellent opportunity for joint programming and other collaborations among schools.

Treatments within these areas should distinctly display campus colors and signage to signify that they are common campus space, though they can also reflect the function of the space and/or the presence of each school.



In the cafeteria, for example, campuses might place awnings over entrances and individual school shields on the columns or walls. In gymnasiums, each school and the campus can be represented by a large sign or vertical banner hanging from the rafters, height permitting. Auditoriums, on the other hand, require a lighter touch to avoid distracting audiences from the onstage performances. Treatments might include campus shields beside the stage, the name of the campus written over the stage in highly visible lettering, or school shields on the side walls.

Campus Directory and Uniform Signage System

As campus buildings transform into multiple learning communities, a campus directory and uniform signage system provide visitors, students, and staff with color-coded and floor-by-floor listings of schools. A school's corresponding colors can guide newcomers through the building.

Directories can be located in all major entrances to the building and near major vertical circulation routes such as elevators and stairwells. Some campuses have put directories inside the elevator itself. Other important locations throughout the building (principals' offices, health clinic, library, cafeteria, gymnasium, auditorium) may be marked with small color-coded signs that indicate whether they are shared campus or dedicated school spaces.

Additional signs using schools' individual colors can be placed on each stairwell landing to identify the floor number and the school(s) located on that floor.

Large School Signs

Large school signs (4' x 6') that depict each school's symbol, colors, and name provide a way for anchoring a school in its dedicated space. These should go in the most heavily trafficked areas of the school, at entrance thresholds or next to elevators or stairwells. Large signage in each school's corridors denotes its "autonomous" space within the campus building. These signs also remind students of the school mission and each community's distinct identity.

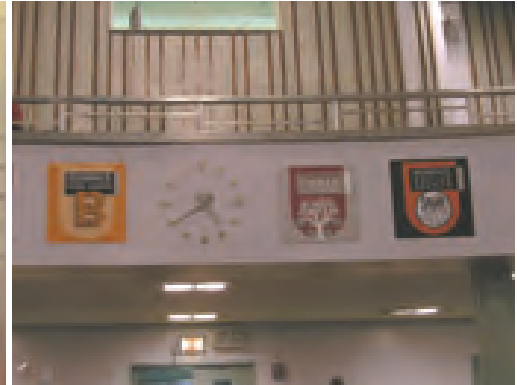
Corridors

In addition to large school signs, a myriad of options are available for branding a school's corridor. One easy and effective method has been to paint a portion of each school's hallway in the school colors. If painting is not an option because of lockers or other barriers, multiple signs or banners can be hung from the corridor ceiling and/or transparent decals placed on classroom windows to identify the schools that use them. The goal is to use colors and signage to create a distinctive setting for each school, so that entering a corridor or classroom feels unique and is clearly associated with a specific school.

Paint

Uniform painting in campus colors—of stair railings, school doorways, and other common spaces—gives the campus building a more cohesive feel. Dedicated and common areas can also be painted to match school and campus colors.

At Morris High School Campus, for instance, every corridor in the building was painted from floor to chair rail in each respective school's principle color, clearly indicating each school's space.



Thresholds

In addition to treating individual and shared spaces as described above, school and campus identity may be reinforced with doorway treatments such as awnings or archways at the entry points to shared spaces or threshold entrances to individual schools.

For example, if a set of doors separates one school from another, then the symbol of the school to which the door leads may be placed above it or on the door itself. Similarly, transit vinyl may be used to cover elevator doors with a school's symbol.

Case Study: South Bronx Campus



The prototype campus for New Visions' visual branding program was South Bronx Campus. On this campus, the phaseout of the large school occurred simultaneously with the implementation of the visual branding program. The building's relatively small size, as well as the history of collaboration among schools on the campus, eased the way for the branding process.

Historically, South Bronx High School was represented by the colors purple and gold. The campus adopted these colors as the basis of the campus-wide visual system in order to maintain a sense of history and continuity with the original large school. Among the small schools, Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School had already developed a strong attachment to teal and gold, having used these colors previously in some of their promotional literature. The Academy for Careers in Sports and New Explorers High School were not previously invested in any colors and so were led through a collaborative brainstorm to identify the right colors for their schools. Giving close attention to how selected colors would interact with the colors of the other school, the Academy for Careers in Sports opted for beige and purple and New Explorers chose green and gold.

For school symbols, South Bronx Campus adopted a modernized version of a shield that conjured heraldry and tradition. This stylized shield solidified the personalized culture of family and support that small schools seek to create.

The symbols of the South Bronx Campus schools are shown at left. Each symbol represents concepts intrinsic to the school mission and culture and was created through an in-depth participatory design process. Themes from the discussions with the schools early in the process included a focus on individual and group achievement, a strong foundation for future successes, and expanding the mind. These themes provided a backdrop for individual school themes.

The **Academy for Careers in Sports** integrates sports and sports-related fields such as marketing, management, law, medicine, journalism, and broadcasting into a challenging high school curriculum. Participants discussed appropriate symbols ranging from a TV camera with a headset to different sporting equipment. In the process, a decision emerged to illustrate both parts of the school's mission, not just the more easily illustrated sports connection. A torch connotes both academic and athletic excellence.

Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School combines studies of humanities and natural science with community service and environmental awareness. The value of community and academic achievement is captured with the visual of a sunburst. The sunburst is as much stylistic as it is symbolic, capturing the brilliance and power of a high-level education.

New Explorers High School prepares students for college, professional opportunities, and lives of productive citizenship through a student-centered, project-based, experiential learning environment derived from the inquiry model of teaching and learning. This school encourages students to consider education as a metaphor for adventure and to take opportunities to explore the world beyond school. This theme of exploration is captured in pairing the compass rose with the school initials.

At the close of the branding process, **South Bronx Campus** held a celebratory ribbon cutting ceremony with speeches by many officials, including a City Council member, the Borough President, and all of the campus principals. Approximately eight hundred people filled the street in front of the school to participate in the event, and student ambassadors from each school led building tours for the press and visitors.

The impact of the branding dramatically shifted student, teacher, and principal viewpoints.

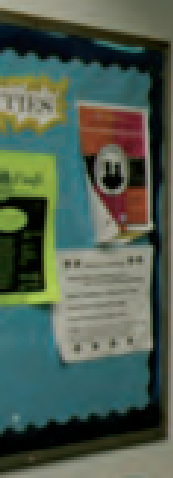


“Our school is now validated, with a clear identity.”

**—Ana Maldonado,
Principal of Mott Haven Village Prep**



NEW YORK HARBOR SCHOOL



Person

The Impact of Branding a Campus



The goal of visual branding is to transform buildings into identifiable homes for multiple schools, allowing for unique identities within a common structure. In addition to immediate cosmetic and functional improvements, longer-term benefits may grow out of the collaborative relationships fostered by the participatory design process. One goal is that continued collaboration among the schools on the campus will eventually extend to joint approaches to improving student outcomes.

In addition, visual branding may act as a catalyst for linking campuses and neighborhoods. Inviting the community into the building for a ribbon cutting ceremony, for instance, is an effective, positive way to plant the seeds for a deeper relationship that recognizes the school as a center of community: a place where parents, community members, and educators can work as a team to improve student achievement.

Positioning a newly transformed building within the community can create an opportunity for community involvement that complements the schools' mission, helps deepen curricular focus, and provides new ways to nurture and support students and families. 🌐

Branded Environments Contributors

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Poletech

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Victor Klein
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Our company's vision, values, and quality plan are based on a single focus: To deliver the highest possible level of customer satisfaction. To achieve this goal, we have committed ourselves to being the most technologically current, client service-driven, quality oriented and talent nurturing company in the graphic communications market.

We do not specialize in niche markets; our wide and varied client base includes both corporate and advertising agency accounts in the fashion, automotive, high-tech and financial industries. We focus on forming strategic partnerships with our clients. By offering consistent support and acting as a dependable resource on complex technical issues, our goal is to enhance, enrich and expand our customer relationships.

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Kathleen Grimm
*Deputy Chancellor for
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Garth Harries
CEO, Office of New Schools
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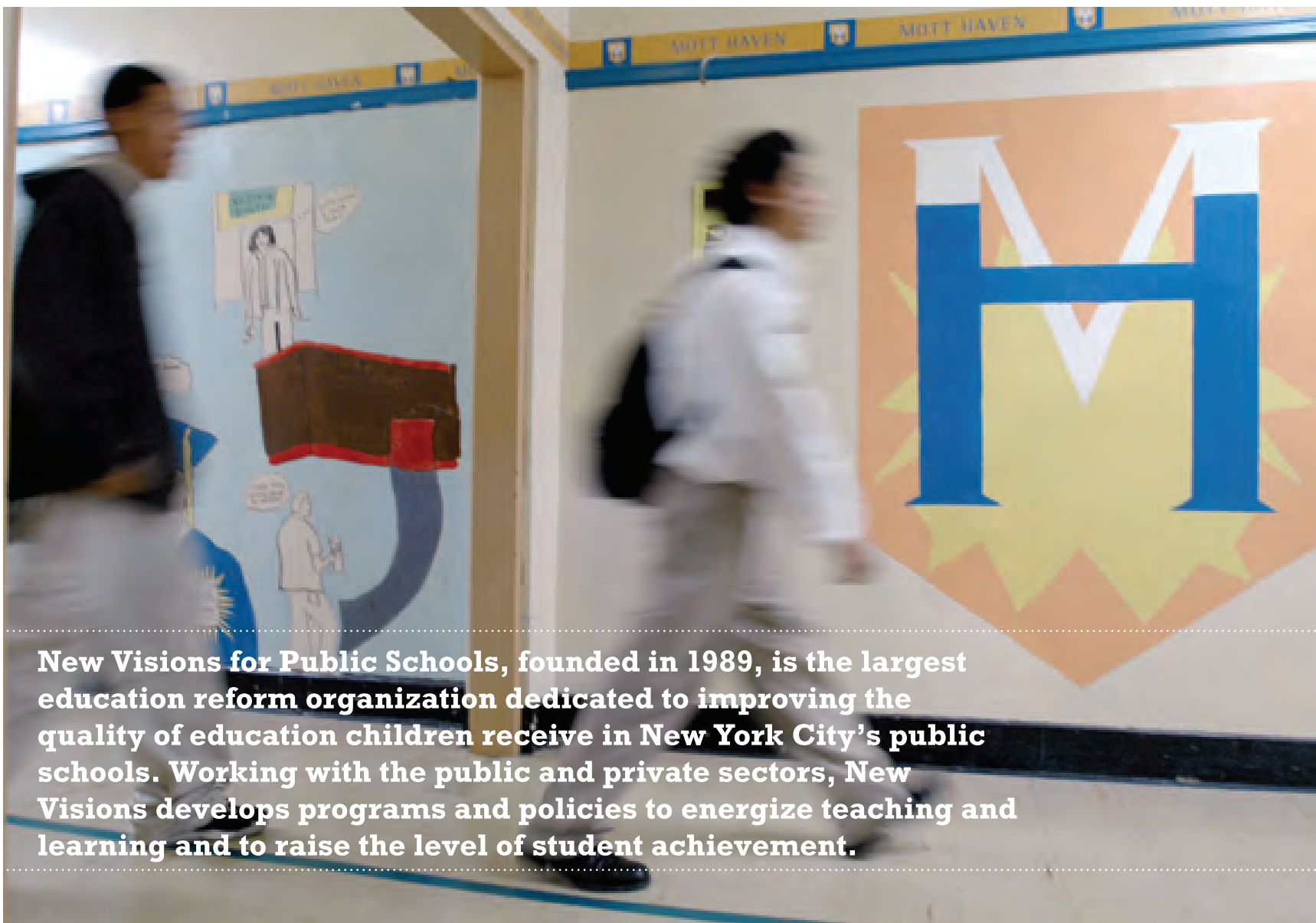
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Robert Hughes
President
Lili Brown
*Vice President, Development and
External Affairs*
Beverly Donohue
Vice President, Policy and Research
Samira Ahmed
Director, External Affairs
Adam Rubin
Director, Policy and Research
Ruth Genn
Senior Policy Analyst
Rosemarie Rizzo-Tolk
Senior Facilities Analyst
Susan Fine
Consultant
Brad Gunton
Policy Officer

School Construction Authority

Bruce Barrett
Vice President—Architecture and Engineering
Aileen DelPrado
Design Manager—Architecture and Engineering
Elan Abneri
Design Manager—Studio 1
Xenia Cox
Senior Construction Assessments Specialist
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Senior Construction Assessments Specialist

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New Visions for Public Schools, founded in 1989, is the largest education reform organization dedicated to improving the quality of education children receive in New York City's public schools. Working with the public and private sectors, New Visions develops programs and policies to energize teaching and learning and to raise the level of student achievement.