



Perkins School for the Blind

Lower School Construction and Renovation



Groundbreaking – November 2, 2009



Perkins School for the Blind

- Founded in 1829 in Boston
- The first school for people who are blind in the US
- First school in the world to educate a person who is deafblind (Laura Bridgman, 1837)
- Helen Keller and her teacher, Anne Sullivan, were educated at Perkins in the 1880s
- First kindergarten for children who are blind
- First education program in Massachusetts for families of babies who are blind
- Nearly 200 day and residential students attend classes on the Watertown campus
- Perkins teachers work with about 750 children in Massachusetts, including babies and public school students
- This year, there are students enrolled from nine states, including Massachusetts
- Provides services to almost 100,000 individuals in the US and 63 countries

Architectural History

- 1832 Classes held in a private home.
- 1833 Moved to Perkins Mansion in Boston as program expanded.
- 1839 Moved to former Washington Hotel in South Boston.
- 1887 Kindergarten opened in Jamaica Plain (Boston).
- 1910 Acquired Stickney Estate property in Watertown, overlooking the Charles River. Architect R. Clipston Sturgis designed the Watertown campus combining the South Boston and Jamaica Plain campuses.
- 1912 Moved to 38.5 acre Watertown campus with safer, fireproof, brick buildings replacing wooden structures. Kindergarten and primary grades merged to become Lower School.
- 2009 Started construction on new Lower School schoolhouse and announced plans to build Grousbeck Center for Students and Technology.



Lower School

- The Lower School is part of a campus based program that serves students from pre-kindergarten through age 22
- 50 day and residential students attend Perkins Lower School
- Most students are visually impaired, with one or more additional disabilities

The new schoolhouse will...

- Be more accessible for all students
- Be safer with improved fire protection, better locks, wider halls and doorways
- Be more healthful with more, better, fully accessible bathroom facilities
- Encourage independence with more logical layouts
- Have larger, more flexible classrooms
- Further support adaptive high-technology developments
- Be used more year-round with up-dated heating and air-conditioning systems
- Honor Perkins' history and legacy

The Project

- New schoolhouse built and historic buildings renovated
- Two years of planning based on staff and community input
- 54,000 square foot new Schoolhouse will be constructed
- 98,000 square feet of renovated space in the existing Lower School
- 2 ½ year project duration
- 50 full-time jobs will be created that last the duration of the project
- More than 300 workers will be employed throughout the project
- 150 tons of construction waste will be re-used or recycled
- \$30 million in building and renovation costs financed through Massachusetts Development
- \$5 million in savings through project timing and prudent bid management



Green Facts Highlights

- Reuse, recycle, salvage 90% of non-hazardous waste
- Use recycled materials where possible
- Reduce water use by 50% from baseline
- Install water saving plumbing
- Carpets meet Green Label standards
- Green roof reduces heat-island effect
- Maximize day lighting to use less energy
- Sun shading, special glass, energy saving HVAC and lighting to reduce impact on the environment
- Use photovoltaics to generate energy
- Select Energy Star appliances

