

# HICAPS Highlights

Providing a centralized approach to project management

Winter 2025



*Brooks Global Studies*



*Peck Expeditionary Learning School*

## Guilford County School Projects Completed

**O**n January 6, 2025, HICAPS supported Guilford County Schools (GCS) in performing a nearly improbable task—opening three new schools on the same day! HICAPS served as GCS's Owner's Rep to successfully fulfill its 2020 \$300 million bond program that included Peck Expeditionary Learning School, Brooks Global Studies, and Foust Robotics & Gaming Elementary School (the first of its kind in the United States). Each of these schools were completed within budget, ahead of schedule, and built to a level of quality that exceeds the industry standard.

HICAPS thrives in the educational marketplace. With more than \$3 billion in completed educational projects, HICAPS considers the art of completing a new school to be challenging and exciting. Planning, designing, and building a new school requires a complex process involving stakeholder engagement; thorough site analysis; detailed curriculum development; careful budgeting; architectural design aligned with educational needs; acquisition of permits; hiring a construction team;

and managing the construction process while considering future flexibility and technological integration—all while prioritizing student learning experiences and community input.

Key aspects we consider as we develop, design, and build new schools include:

- Needs assessment: Identifying specific educational needs of the student population, including age groups, learning styles, and potential future growth.
- Site selection: Evaluating potential locations based on accessibility, size, environmental factors, and community proximity.
- Stakeholder engagement: Involving parents, teachers, administrators, and community members to gather feedback and build support for the project.
- Curriculum development: Determining the educational program, including specialized learning areas and necessary facilities to support it.
- Architectural design: Creating a building layout that facilitates learning,

incorporates modern technology, and considers accessibility and safety needs.

- Budgeting and funding: Developing a detailed financial plan, exploring potential funding sources like government grants, bonds, and community donations.
- Permits and approvals: Obtaining building permits and complying with local zoning regulations.
- Construction team selection: Hiring a qualified architect, engineer, contractor, and other relevant professionals.
- Construction management: Overseeing the construction process, ensuring adherence to plans, timelines, budgets, and quality standards.
- Technology integration: Planning for technology infrastructure to support modern learning methods.
- Sustainability considerations: Incorporating environmentally-friendly design features to reduce energy consumption.

Other important factors include flexibility for future needs and changes in educational practices and technology;

*continued on page 4*

**HICAPS**

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*Sable, corkscrew and sickle are terms used to describe which part of a dog's body?*



## Trivial Pursuits

- 1) Which of these U.S. cities never served as the nation's capital?
  - a) Philadelphia
  - b) New York
  - c) Boston
  - d) Washington
- 2) Which of these particles of matter has a negative charge?
  - a) proton
  - b) neutron
  - c) electron
  - d) neutrino
- 3) Which type of artisan commonly employs a kick wheel?
  - a) potter
  - b) carpenter
  - c) diamond cutter
  - d) glassblower
- 4) Who invented the mercury thermometer?
  - a) Anders Celsius
  - b) William Kelvin
  - c) Daniel Fahrenheit
  - d) Galileo Galilei
- 5) *Sable, corkscrew* and *sickle* are terms used to describe which part of a dog's body?
  - a) tongue
  - b) ears
  - c) hair
  - d) tail

—from *mental floss*

Answers: 1) c; 2) c; 3) a; 4) c; 5) d.

## Build Innovation Into Your Culture

How can you build a culture of creativity and innovation in your organization? Vicki Huff of PwC offers these suggestions on the *Strategy + Business* website:

- **Support a sense of pride.** Make sure your co-workers and employees know what good things your organization does for your customers and community. When they feel proud of their work, they'll try harder to find new ideas for improvement.
- **Don't punish failure.** As long as people are trying their best, don't make failure something to fear or be ashamed of. Let people know you want them to take risks and fail occasionally on the road to greater success.
- **Empower people.** Let them make decisions about how they work best. If it makes sense for your business, encourage flexible scheduling and working from home to show you trust them to make their own decisions.
- **Put the customer first.** For every idea that comes up, start by asking, "How does this help our customers?" Focus on long-term value so you can create loyal customers who'll keep doing business with you for years. Creating a customer-centric culture will help keep your employees and co-workers focused on what is most important.

## A Rational Approach To Risk

Leaders are responsible for strategy and plans—and managing the risks involved in carrying them out. Here are some techniques for minimizing your exposure:

- **Examine the assumptions in your plan.** Ask basic questions to pinpoint the foundations of your strategies, and decide which of your assumptions are built on information that's incorrect or could change. For instance, the cost of goods that you have calculated in your plan could go up, which could change the amount of profit you project.
- **Look for warning signs.** Identify potential obstacles to a successful outcome. Have other organizations failed at similar projects? Are you assuming that conditions won't change, or that a competitor won't strike back? Question your assumptions again to be sure you haven't overlooked anything.
- **Take preventative action.** Look for ways to reduce your vulnerability. You can't plan for every possible contingency, but you can prepare for the most likely problems.
- **Set up a hedge strategy.** Split your bet to minimize the risk and maximize your chances of success. For instance, can you develop two new products to test instead of one? Don't stretch yourself (and your team) too thin, but look for ways to improve your odds by sharing resources as well as risk.

## Any Time Is Good For Exercise And Sleep

If you're not getting enough sleep, your work will suffer the next day. If it becomes an ongoing problem, you could find yourself out of the running for promotions and opportunities that will go instead to more energetic (and well-rested) colleagues.

One solution: Work out a little every day. The National Sleep Foundation reported on a study that found that people who exercise for as little as 10 minutes per day tend to sleep better and wake up feeling more rested than those who don't exercise at all.

The belief that working out before bedtime is harmful to good sleep wasn't borne out by another study, this one from the University of South Carolina. Researchers found that young males in good physical condition reported no sleep problems after riding stationary bikes for up to three hours before going to bed. Exercise—at any time of the day or night—appears to be vital to getting the rest you need.



## Make A Commitment To Workplace Safety

Your employees' safety is a paramount concern, but you can't protect them all by yourself. They should assume some responsibility for taking care of themselves. Here's how to motivate employees to create a safe workplace:

- **Make safety an organizational value.** Emphasize safety from Day One. Include it in your employee handbook. Address it on a regular basis. Hold regular safety trainings. Showing your commitment to safety will help employees take it seriously.
- **Involve upper management.** Make sure the CEO supports employee safety in a visible way—by talking about it, listening to employees' concerns, and following safety procedures him- or herself.
- **Involve your workforce.** Don't just hand down rules and procedures from on high. Ask employees for their input. What problems do they see? What works, and what doesn't? Listen to and act on their opinions.
- **Set high expectations.** Don't settle for the bare minimum when it comes to safety. Let employees know they're expected to follow procedures without exception. Work with them on setting goals that protect them fully.

SPEED BUMP

Dave Coverly



## Neutralize Information Overload To Stay Up To Date

You can't accomplish ambitious goals without the right kind of information—and the right amount of it. Be careful not to get buried in data that's irrelevant. To become a conscientious consumer of news and information, follow this advice:

- **Don't read everything.** You simply can't absorb everything that's out there. Concentrate on prioritizing data, handing it off to someone who can decide whether you need to digest it, and discarding what's not useful.
- **Assess your information sources.** Identify sources of information that are essential and trustworthy. Weed out any publication, website or professional association whose information isn't of the highest quality.
- **Scan for information.** When you open a publication or look at a website, skim before diving in. Focus only on articles or reports that you need to read, not what's just mildly interesting to you. Stick to what's important.
- **Highlight the important stuff.** As you read a blog, book, or magazine, highlight or underline key messages. Save online articles in a special folder, and check it every once in a while. If you haven't gone back to any saved material, discard it.
- **Be an example.** If you don't want to get bogged down by long emails, texts, or voice messages, keep your own short. Let others know that they should keep their information as concise as possible—and remind them when they don't.



## What You Learned In College Can Help You Throughout Life

A terrific grade-point average in college doesn't guarantee success in life. But the skills you learned in class can help you excel on the job:

- **Don't turn in work late.** Some professors lowered your grade when you submitted a late paper. Deadlines are even more important in the workplace.
- **Show up.** Professors recognized who was a constant presence in class, and whose attendance was spotty. Your boss will see you as reliable if you're there every day.
- **Explore extracurricular activities.** When you're involved in something outside work, you'll be more productive and organized with your time—and learn skills to use in your career.

## Pet Project

You may not be able to claim Fido or Fluffy as dependents, but lots of people do consider their animal companions to be full members of the family. Data analyzed by *Forbes Advisor* shows that 66% of U.S. households own a pet and were expected to spend \$150.6 billion in 2024. In 2018, they spent \$91 billion, and, in 2022, it shot up to \$137 billion, according to the American Pet Products Association. In its 2024 State of the Industry report, the trade organization said the outlook for the pet industry's continued growth means there may be \$207 billion in pet spending by 2030.

# Guilford County Schools... *continued from page 1*

building safety features and emergency preparedness; and the impact the new school will have on the broader community.

The school construction process has many steps aimed at making sure our schools are well-built to meet the needs of students, staff, and the community. Educational Specifications, or ed specs, are the ingredients for an effective educational space, and they are more than the number of classrooms. They define the types of spaces needed in a school, their features, how students and staff interact with them, and how they tie into an overall vision for a school. Depending on the size of a project, it can take three to six months to finalize ed specs based on conversations with school leaders, staff, community members and students.

Next, schematic Design translates ed specs into an initial building layout. These are the basic building blocks of a school:

classroom wings, gymnasium, commons, and other types of large spaces. Architects take these components and determine the best layout for educational needs, as well as how it can fit on the building site. This results in architectural renderings that show what a school will look like from the outside.

Design development is the next step that includes designing specific spaces, such as individual classrooms suited to specific needs such as language arts and sciences, offices, and other specialized spaces.

Construction documents are the actual building plans that are filed with local governments for building permits and used by contractors and subcontractors to construct the facility. These are drawn up by the building's architect and usually take three or more months to complete.

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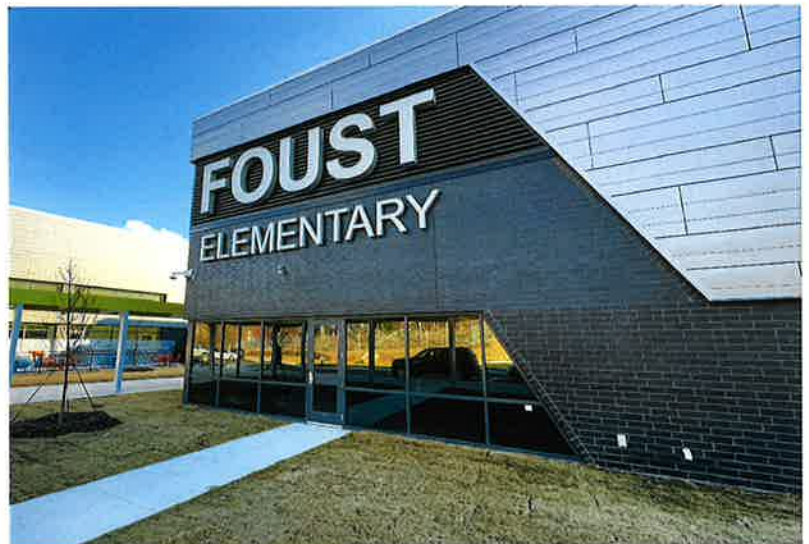


# Guilford County Schools...

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Seeking bids for construction of a school is itself a highly regulated and careful process. The district publishes the construction documents and construction firms review them to develop their qualifications statement, which are then fully analyzed by HICAPS and the district's staff before being presented to the school board to award the project to the successful contractor.

Construction of a school can take anywhere from one to two years depending on the size and how many specialized spaces or facilities it will include. HICAPS and the district's staff visit school construction sites regularly to review progress and address challenges that may arise during the building process.



HICAPS is an unlimited Licensed General Contractor in Connecticut, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee.