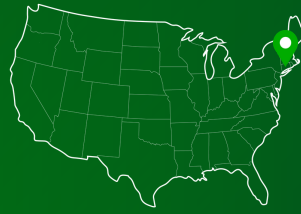


PROJECT PROFILE

Interdistrict Discovery Magnet School Bridgeport, Connecticut



THE
**BEAUTY
OF BLOCK**



Photo Credit: Jandris Block

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Plans for a state-of-the-art K-12 school called for a building material both cost-effective and adaptable to a wide range of goals, including sustainability as well as ambitious designs and aesthetics. CMU answered that call and exceeded expectations, allowing builders to achieve distinct curving surfaces and tactile beauty without sacrificing durability. Using split-face and ground-face block from a local supplier, this project proves that CMU has a valued place in high-efficiency design.

WHAT MAKES THIS PROJECT UNIQUE?

As a school, this structure had to have the ability to foster a rich and nourishing learning environment. For the school's interiors, builders worked with Discovery Museum to design interactive surfaces for which students created sculptures focusing on themes of sustainability. These were ultimately incorporated directly into the masonry.

PROJECT CHALLENGES

With limited funding for the construction of a new public school, it was imperative to find a cost-effective building material that doesn't compromise on quality, durability or safety. Locally sourced CMU delivered.

CMU'S CONTRIBUTION TO PERFORMANCE & DESIGN

- CMU delivered on three critical goals: cost, flexibility and sustainability. In addition to being practical, CMU also allowed designers to achieve truly unique aesthetics that show off the versatility and design flexibility of block.

ADVICE FOR OTHERS

CMU doesn't have to be limited to straight walls and neutral finishes. With thoughtful detailing, block can remain cost-effective and durable while supporting expressive design, sustainability targets and a learning environment that feels intentional and inviting.

PROJECT INFO

- Location - Bridgeport, CT
- Completion Date - 2011
- Project Type - Institutional & Civic
- CMU Scope - Architectural

TEAM INFO

- Producer - Jandris Block
- Architect - Svigals + Partners, an FCA Company
- Engineer - Michael Horton Associates
- Contractor - Joe Capasso Enterprises



Interdistrict Discovery Magnet School

Bridgeport, Connecticut

The Interdistrict Discovery Magnet School uses concrete masonry in a way that's both practical and expressive. Designed by Svigals + Partners, an FCA Company, the K–8 school reflects its focus on science and hands-on learning, with materials chosen to work hard and contribute to the building's identity from day one.

According to architect Marissa Mead, CMU offered the right balance of cost, flexibility and sustainability. "It was a cost-effective material for this public-school project," she noted, "and allowed us to customize the design without cost markups. The fact that the block was sourced within 500 miles also helped support the school's LEED certification."

The team selected split-face and ground-face block from Jandris, whose colors and textures support the building's gentle curves and warm, tactile character.

Those curves have become one of the school's defining features, showing how masonry can do much more than form straight, utilitarian walls. Heidi Jandris has often highlighted this project as a favorite for exactly

that reason: the block's color palette and fluid lines demonstrate the material's range without sacrificing durability.

Inside, the CMU surfaces become part of the learning environment. Partnering with the Discovery Museum, students created sculptures focused on sustainability and humanity's impact on the planet. These pieces were incorporated directly into the masonry, turning the walls into a kind of gallery woven through daily school life.

As one of the first LEED Gold school buildings in Connecticut, Discovery Magnet shows how concrete masonry can support high-efficiency design — offering thermal performance, durability and low maintenance. But it also shows how block can help shape a building that feels warm, approachable and aligned with a school's mission.

Interdistrict Discovery Magnet School stands as a strong example of what CMU can contribute: a sense of permanence, expressive form and a material honesty that suits a place of learning.

