



You are here: [Home](#) > [Daily News](#) > [Bennett Day School Gets Flagship Campus](#)

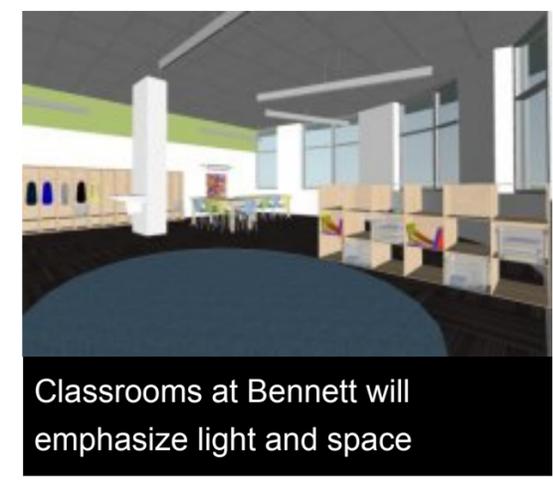
Last Updated: July 11, 2014

UPDATE

Bennett Day School Gets Flagship Campus

By [Brian J. Rogal](#) | Chicago

*Going away this summer? Get the region's commercial news in your inbox with GlobeSt.com's **Chicago AM Alert**. Follow the latest transactions, industry activities and read interviews that keep you informed. [Sign Up Today!](#)*



Classrooms at Bennett will emphasize light and space

CHICAGO—**Bennett Day School**, a two-year old to eighth grade progressive school in the West Loop, has just signed a long-term lease for its flagship campus at 955 W. Grand Avenue. As reported in GlobeSt.com, the **first campus at 657 W. Fulton St. will start inaugural classes** on August 25. And local real estate developers have said the school is a good sign that the former industrial area, now filling up with giant developments like **K2** and **Echelon at K Station**, has become a true neighborhood that will now attract even more residents.

“A school coming in is a really great thing,” **Steve Fifield**, president and chief executive officer of **Fifield Cos.**, told GlobeSt.com. When Fifield started developing the K Station apartment buildings in the West Loop about ten years ago, “we felt that the neighborhood hadn’t completely gelled yet.”

The new campus will return the historic location on Grand back to one of its original uses as a progressive school. The building, formerly known as **Chicago Commons** and designed by **Pond and Pond**, was built in 1900 as a settlement house modeled after **Jane Addams’ Hull House**. The existing campus is enrolling two- through five-year olds and the new space will expand classes up to the eighth grade.

“We are thrilled to bring Chicago families a continuous progressive education through their formative years,” said **Cameron Smith**, co-founder and chief executive officer of Bennett Day School. “Restoring this historic Chicago building to one of its original uses, as a place of learning, is at the core of what we stand for at Bennett Day School.”

Smith plans to open the flagship campus by the fall of 2016. Like the Grand location, it will use the **Reggio Emilia** approach to learning. The approach was developed in post-WWII Italy and gives students some control over their course of study, gets parents closely involved, and makes sure students have access to lots of natural light and common areas called piazzas. In addition, the building will have a full-size gym, multiple **TinkerLabs**, and over 10,000-square-feet of green space.

“As a real estate developer, you often see opportunities to build condos, restaurants, and offices -- but not schools,” said **Alex Pearsall** of **Property Adventures**, the developer of 955 W. Grand. “At Property Adventures, we pride ourselves on pursuing out-of-the-ordinary development projects, and we look forward to working with Bennett Day School.”

The architecture firm **Filorama Talsma** will oversee the building exterior under the direction of **Chris Talsma**. **BLDD**, led by **Timothy McGrath**, will design the interior. **Patrick Vizzone** of **Colliers International** advised Bennett Day School in the lease negotiations and **Justin Collins** of **Jameson Commercial Real Estate** advised Property Adventures.

***Be sure to check out** [GlobeSt.com's NEW PropertyALERT](#) which provides owners and brokers a dynamic new marketing platform in which to showcase properties and initiate deals. This economical marketing tool will create increased awareness for your property for a minimal investment.*

Related Topics: [Midwest](#)

About Our Columnist



Brian J. Rogal is a Chicago-based freelance writer with years of experience as an investigative reporter and editor, most notably at *The Chicago Reporter*, where he concentrated on housing issues. He also has written extensively on alternative energy and the payments card industry for national trade publications.
[Bio](#) | [Email](#)