

Baca/Dlo' Ay Azhi School

The Baca/Dlo' Ay Azhi Consolidated Replacement School is a design/build project; as such, the quality of design and construction were addressed together at the onset of the project. The quality of the project was extremely important for several reasons: First, the school had to serve the surrounding community for many years to come; second, the school had to meet the stringent requirements of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Army Corps of Engineers; and third, the school had to be the best possible for its allotted budget.

In addition to the school being designed to address the functional needs of its students, staff and community, the school was also designed to address and reflect the important cultural elements of the Navajo Nation. The school's design is circular with four quadrants extending out from a central core. Each quadrant is sited along the north/south or the east/west axes and represents one of the four cardinal directions. The end of each quadrant is designed to bring nature and the outside world into the facility: Large expanses of glass allow natural light to flow into the building and provide beautiful views towards each cardinal direction point and towards the colorful native xeric landscaping.

The walls of most of the school's spaces radiate from the central core of the building either by pointing back to the center of the facility or outward in concentric circles. The administration/health/special programs wing is designed as an abstracted feather motif. The walls and this wing reflect how feathers are used in the Native American culture. Feathers radiating outward from the central core are found throughout Native American motifs and are incorporated into items, such as war shields, headgear and medicine bags.

The Baca/Dlo' Ay Azhi Consolidated Replacement School achieved a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Certification by the US Green Building Council. The first certified project in the state of New Mexico.



Location..... Prewitt, NM
 Owner Bureau of Indian Affairs
 Architect
 Design.....Dyron Murphy Architects
 Documents NCA Architects
 Cost.....\$12.8M
 Size 80,000 sf
 Completed August 2003

