

# ÉCOLE AU-COEUR-DE-L'ÎLE

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

École Au-cœur-de-l'île is truly a 21st century school—looking to the future by offering significant educational and environmental benefits.

During the day, it delivers cutting-edge learning opportunities for francophone students from kindergarten to Grade 12 in the Courtenay and Comox Valley region; and at night it turns into a hub for the local francophone community.

The construction demonstrates the latest sustainable building techniques. The new school, which opened in 2011 to the LEED Gold standard, used existing timber salvaged from the original structure. Other design features include ground source (geothermal) heating and cooling, reuse of rainwater for irrigation and extensive use of low volatile organic compounds (VOC) in construction.

### LOCATION

Comox, British Columbia

### SIZE

4,500 m<sup>2</sup>

### COMPLETION

2011

### CAPACITY

380 students and  
community activities

### ARCHITECTS

McFarland Marceau Architects Ltd.

### STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

Equilibrium Consulting

### GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Ketza Pacific

### PROJECT OWNER

Conseil scolaire francophone de  
la Colombie-Britannique/B.C.'s  
Francophone School District  
No. 93

### B.C. GOVERNMENT MINISTRY

Ministry of Education

In 2012, École Au-cœur-de-l'île received the Wood WORKS! BC Design Award for Institutional Wood Design—Large. The award recognizes the benefits of wood in a large institutional application while showcasing the special qualities of wood such as strength, durability, beauty, versatility and cost-effectiveness. The judges praised the appropriate and elegant use of wood in the school, especially the use of certified timber in its 3,000-square-metre roof.

Studies have shown that the use of wood features for schools provides a relaxed, productive indoor environment, promoting a sense of well-being and creating special places that inspire open thinking and new ideas.



Photo courtesy of McFarland Marceau Architects

*“This school has a relaxed yet productive environment with a warm, welcoming feeling that will stay relevant and in trend for many years into the future.”*

**Sylvain Allison**, Secretary Treasurer,  
Conseil Scolaire Francophone de la Colombie Britannique,  
School District 93

## WOOD USE

### Wood roof: elegant and functional

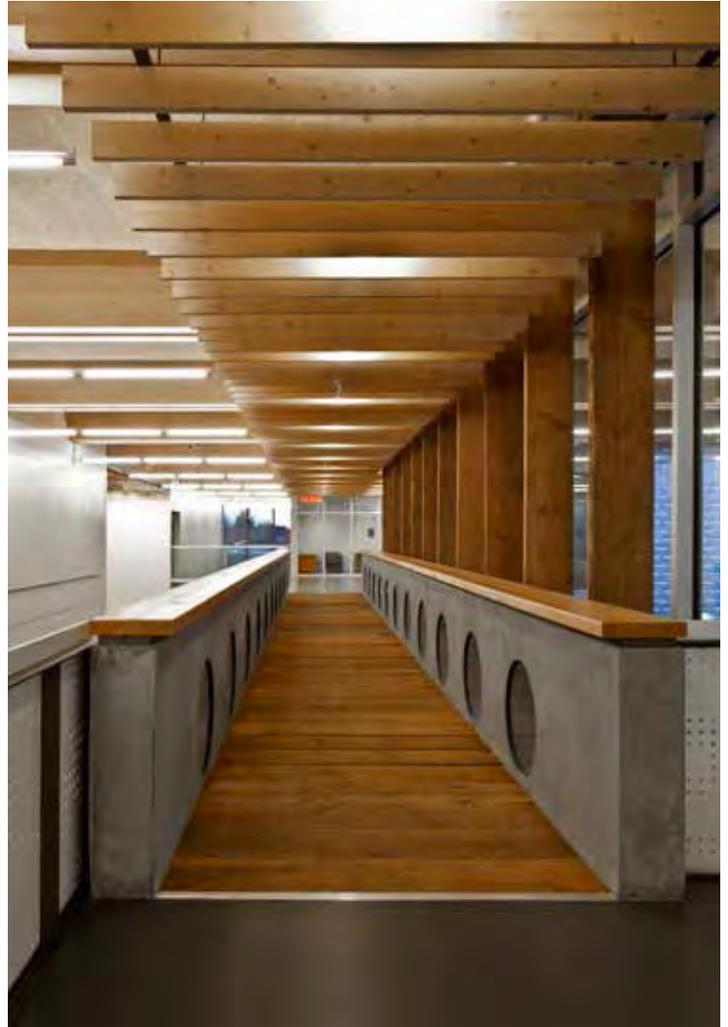
École Au-coeur-de-l'île's award-winning design features a 3,000-square-metre wood roof.

### Psychological benefits: inspires learning

Wood trim and paneling throughout the school offer students and teachers a comforting, safe environment that reduces stress. Research by the University of British Columbia and FPIInnovations concludes that wood interiors reduce stress by creating a comforting, supportive environment.

### Best choice for community space

The use of wood makes the school a great location for local francophone community activities. Wood creates relaxed, productive and high-quality learning spaces, with a tangible connection to nature and the outdoors and an aesthetic appeal that cannot be matched by other building materials.



Photos courtesy of McFarland Marceau Architects

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

This profile is published by Forestry Innovation Investment, the Government of British Columbia's market development agency for forest products.

For more examples of innovative wood building projects throughout British Columbia, visit:

[naturallywood.com](http://naturallywood.com)