

# TRADE SHOW CASE STUDY

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## Visualizing The Optimal Learning Environment

### Background

Cincinnati's DePaul Cristo Rey (DPCR) High School compares itself to the biblical parable of the mustard seed—illustrating how great things come from the smallest beginnings. A low-cost alternative to traditional Catholic High School, most of the students come from homes with average family incomes of \$34,000. At DPCR, these students receive laptops and access to social services, and are also enrolled in work-study programs that give them real-world experience while they're still in high school.

In less than five years, the school has a nearly 100 percent graduation and college acceptance rate, living up to its mustard seed metaphor, giving hundreds of kids in the community a private, college preparatory education and the support they need to reach their full potential.

*Cincinnati's DePaul Cristo Rey School quickly outgrew the former Lutheran church campus that has served as the school's home since its founding.*

*A cramped building has forced DePaul Cristo Rey students to navigate an active driveway to get to mobile classrooms around the school's property.*

DEPAUL CRISTO REY IS ANTICIPATING A **25% ENROLLMENT INCREASE**

### The Potential

In just five years, DePaul Cristo Rey saw extraordinary success (members of its first graduating class garnered more than \$2.9 million in scholarships) and was attracting interest throughout the community with the possibility of nearly doubling enrollment. However, the existing facilities—adapted from a community church and elementary school building, with temporary structures scattered around the property—were not ready to accommodate that level of growth. Even with existing enrollment, students were cutting across driveway traffic to get to buildings in between classes and lunchtime was spread across six periods in order to get everyone into the cafeteria.

### Solving The Challenge

CR architecture + design embraced DPCR's immediate challenge—finding a way to house a rapidly growing population of students—and helped the school develop a master plan to get its students under one roof, streamline the cafeteria schedule, and increase enrollment, opening the doors to more students and their families.

CR used Virtual Design & Construction (VDC) tools to promote collaboration on the project, so that DePaul Cristo Rey could not only build a vision for what the school could become, but build support for the project by sharing that vision with the broader community. Stakeholders could view 3-dimensional renderings and virtually navigate completed spaces, which bolstered fundraising efforts for the school's plans.

**THE COMPLETED PLAN FOR DEPAUL CRISTO REY INCLUDES TWO MAJOR BUILDING ADDITIONS THAT WILL:**

- Bring all students under one roof, eliminating modular classrooms.
- Expand the cafeteria to support current enrollment and anticipated future growth.
- Create classrooms designed to support their ideal teacher to student ratio of 1:25.

Because DePaul Cristo Rey offers students more services than traditional K-12 programs, the master plan also includes facilities for resources including a food pantry, laundry services, a health clinic and social service counseling support.

### The Outcome

Using VDC tools quickly gave stakeholders, donors, students and community members a chance to visualize what the new DePaul Cristo Rey facility could be, proving itself as a valuable collaboration method that helped the school quickly surpass its fundraising goals. With CR's help visualizing the optimal learning environment for DPCR's growing student body, the school is on track to break ground on its \$18.5 million capital improvements project in 2018.

“ THIS PROJECT IS A TRUE COLLABORATION, CR HAS BEEN OPEN MINDED, QUICK TO RESPOND TO REQUESTS, EXTREMELY AVAILABLE FOR MEETINGS AND THOROUGH IN GATHERING INFORMATION. ”

- Sister Jeanne Bessette, President and CEO of DPCR.

FRONT

BACK