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CHILD'S PLAY: Harris Bilingual Immersion Elementary School sixth-graders play a game of Cat and Mouse Tuesday on the new artificial grass at the recently renovated school.

Tyler Ryan, 11, left, grabs the flags of August Wagner, 11, as Delfino Walker, 11, makes it to the safe cone. The \$5 million project was funded by a November 2000 bond issue.

ROOM TO MOVE

\$5 million renovation project at Harris Bilingual is done

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On Tuesday, gym teacher Joshua Gomez took his sixth-grade gym class outside to play a game called Cat and Mouse, but this year, student Demar Sisneros, 11, said she isn't worried about falling down.

"See — no grass stains," Sisneros said, pointing to her clean outfit. The students were playing on the school's new AstroTurf, just one part of Harris Bilingual Immersion Elementary School's \$5 million renovation project.

The \$5 million remodeling and construction project was funded through the \$175 million bond election approved by voters in November 2000.

Built in 1919, Harris, 510 E. Elizabeth St., is one of Poudre School District's oldest schools. Great care was taken to ensure that the historic features of the original building were reflected in the new 20,000-square-foot addition, said Principal Larry Slocum. The project included 10 new classrooms, a kitchen, computer lab, media center and 3,700-square-foot gym/cafeteria.

With 10 new classrooms, the school was able to increase the number of students it could accept, Slocum said, however, not by as much as some might expect. The school increased its optimum enrollment from 315 last



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STRETCH! Sixth-graders at Harris Bilingual Elementary School participate in stretches Tuesday during gym class at the school. The renovation provided students with a new gym.

Interested?

Fort Collins community members and alumni, as well as current Harris Bilingual Immersion Elementary School students, parents and staff are invited to see the school's new addition and participate in a night of entertainment and unity from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday. The school is at 501 E. Elizabeth St. For more information, call 494-5200.

year to 360 this year.

"Really, the addition brought us up to speed for our current students," he said. "For the most part, the population was already here; it just needed to be built to accommodate them."

The new gym, kitchen and elevator helped to make the school com-

pliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Slocum said.

And there are features students may not even know about.

The school uses daylighting with "Low-e" windows, which use special glass to block ultraviolet light and keep heat inside in the winter and out in the summer, said Greg McGaffin, PSD project manager. And the AstroTurf infill is made from recycled tires, McGaffin added.

Sinnett Builders Inc. began construction in summer 2001 and finished in late

August. To speed up the process, school days were lengthened, and students attended class on district in-service days. But all the difficulties were worth it, said Judy Bejarano, mother of a Harris student. "Everyone had that big light at the end of the tunnel to look forward to," said Bejarano, who has three sons at Harris — Dominic, 10, Gabriel, 7 and Vincent, 5.

What was most pleasing was that as progressive as the renovations were, the construction stayed true to the original architecture style, she said.

But Arely Perez, 11, isn't concerned with architecture; she's just excited about not having to walk to nearby Laurel Elementary School or the First United Methodist Church to have gym, music or art classes. "Now we have our own gym again," Perez said.