

2014 Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

Eisenhower High School **REiNVENTION**

Decatur Public Schools #61
Decatur, Illinois

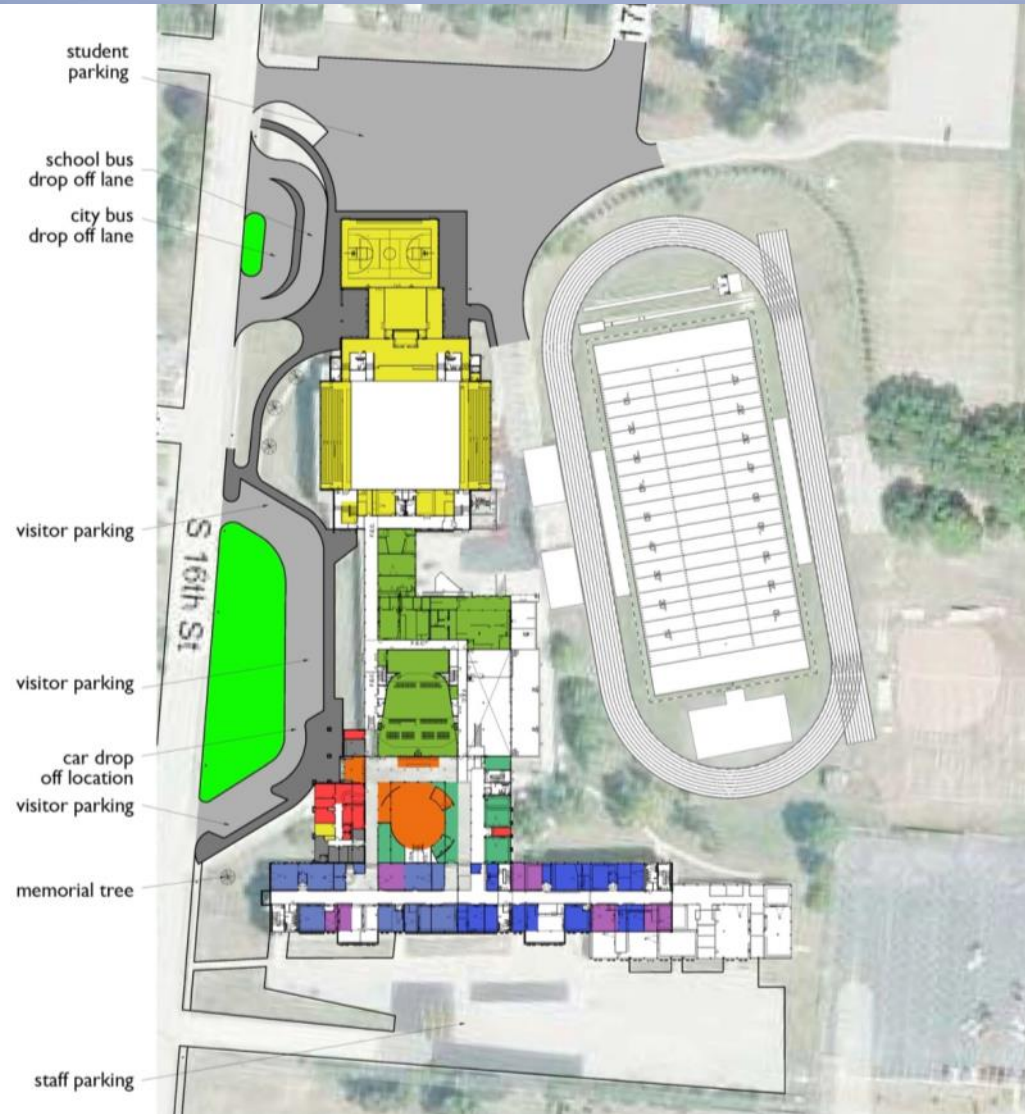
Eisenhower High School

REiNVENTION



Eisenhower High School

REiNVENTION



site plan

RESHAPING expectations

This project came to symbolize the redemption that is possible when a community works to build on their collective aspirations, and takes responsibility for **delivering their future.**

Community: Delivering the Future

A new Superintendent and a Board of Education with vision refused to accept the status quo. They set a path to Reinvent Eisenhower High School:

- Renouncing old paradigms
- Redefining what is possible in Decatur
- Reconnecting the school with the community
- Reshaping expectations for students, staff and community
- Reclaiming student and staff dignity

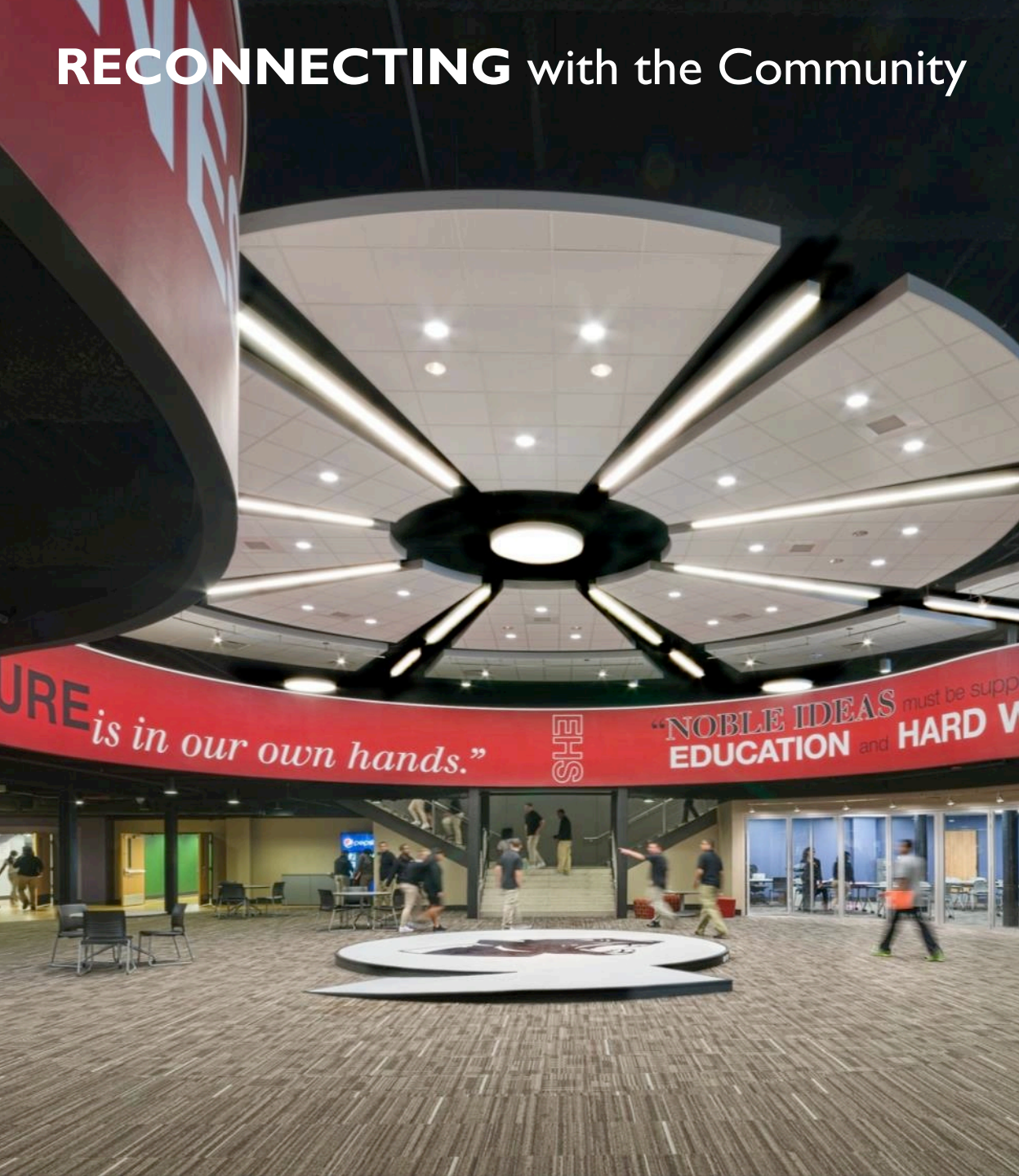
RECONNECTING with the Community

Community: Our Future Is In Our Own Hands

The investment made at the Eisenhower High School confirms that there are few things more important to the citizens of Decatur than public education, and the preparation of its students to be productive members of society.

The renovation of the city's high schools is the most visible and prominent of Decatur's planned improvements, and the project that has the greatest reach into the community. As one of the vehicles for community development and progress, the reinvention of EHS could not be more timely. For community members, the reinvented building is a tangible symbol of the hope they can have for the future of their community.

The reinvented high school includes a Community Room adjacent to the main student commons which creates a home for community members wishing to be involved and volunteer in the school.



Learning Environment: Designing for an Unknown Future

No one can say for sure what future educational programs will look like, and the school district was concerned about how to plan a school with that in mind.

The solution was for this design to be convertible; that is, to accommodate a continuum of instructional delivery, from teacher-centered directed instruction, to student-centered, self paced, and or project based learning.

Flexible glass partitions are strategically located in certain rooms and adjacent to commons spaces. When closed, those partitions create conventional learning environments that support directed instruction. When opened, they create a learning environment that allows space to overlap, flow, and be reconfigured. The open space creates a collection of complimentary spaces, supporting complimentary instructional modalities.

Flexible furnishings have been included to allow students to shape the learning environment to meet their needs, and according to their learning style.



CONVERTIBLE environments

Learning Environment: 21st Century Curriculum & Instruction

The core academic areas of the building are organized into small learning communities (Freshman Academy, Small Learning Community #1, #2, and #3), as opposed to a departmental organization. Each small learning community is themed, creating a unique sense of place for students.

A variety of environments is layered throughout the facility, providing a full compliment of settings:

- Teacher offices
- Collaboration areas
- Breakout spaces
- Specialized instruction

Additionally, the district has installed a wireless network and plans to go to a one-to-one technology initiative in the 2014 – 2015 school year.



before





Engaging Physical Environment:

New spaces, like a Student Commons, Student Store, Information Commons, Community Commons, and Food Court have been included to engage students through learning settings that are less institutional, more real world.

Environmental graphics enliven the space, inspiring and challenging students to achieve. Furnishings are designed to fit the students, not the other way around.



Specialty lighting and signage at the main entry and at the information commons creates a feeling of wonder, value and pride. The “Eisenhower” letters at the building entrance are big and loud, proudly announcing who lives there.

The building is a welcoming environment full of life, where the serpentine walls of the gallery pay tribute to the spirit of previous EHS graduates, and reserve space for the accomplishments of future grads. The school district has noticed that **students don't want to leave**.

Physical Environment: Sustainability

The entire building was re-used demonstrating in a very real way that building re-use is not only possible, but that it can create a wonderful alternative to throwing buildings away every 50 years. Building re-use is an incredibly important approach to conserving our natural resources.

Other Sustainable Features:

Daylight infuses the interior and is further transmitted through interior glass partitions, creating a pleasant feeling of openness and transparency. The entire heating system has been replaced with a one-pipe ground source geothermal heating and cooling system.



Planning Process: Engaging the Community

The community's perception was that the schools were failing, and they were not going to endorse a district-wide effort. To counter this, the school district enlisted the help of three extraordinary community members to lead the dedicated High School Task Force of 150 community volunteers representing all segments of the community. Together, these volunteers provided all of the assets necessary to convey the potential for reinvention, and inspire the community as a whole to take action.



REDEFINING what is possible

The reinvention has helped to redefine what is possible in the community. It has reconnected the school district with the community by restoring the pride community members feel about their school. The value of the process and project to the community at large cannot be overstated. Combined with other city improvements, it has helped fuel a **community spirit renaissance.**



Collaborative Process:

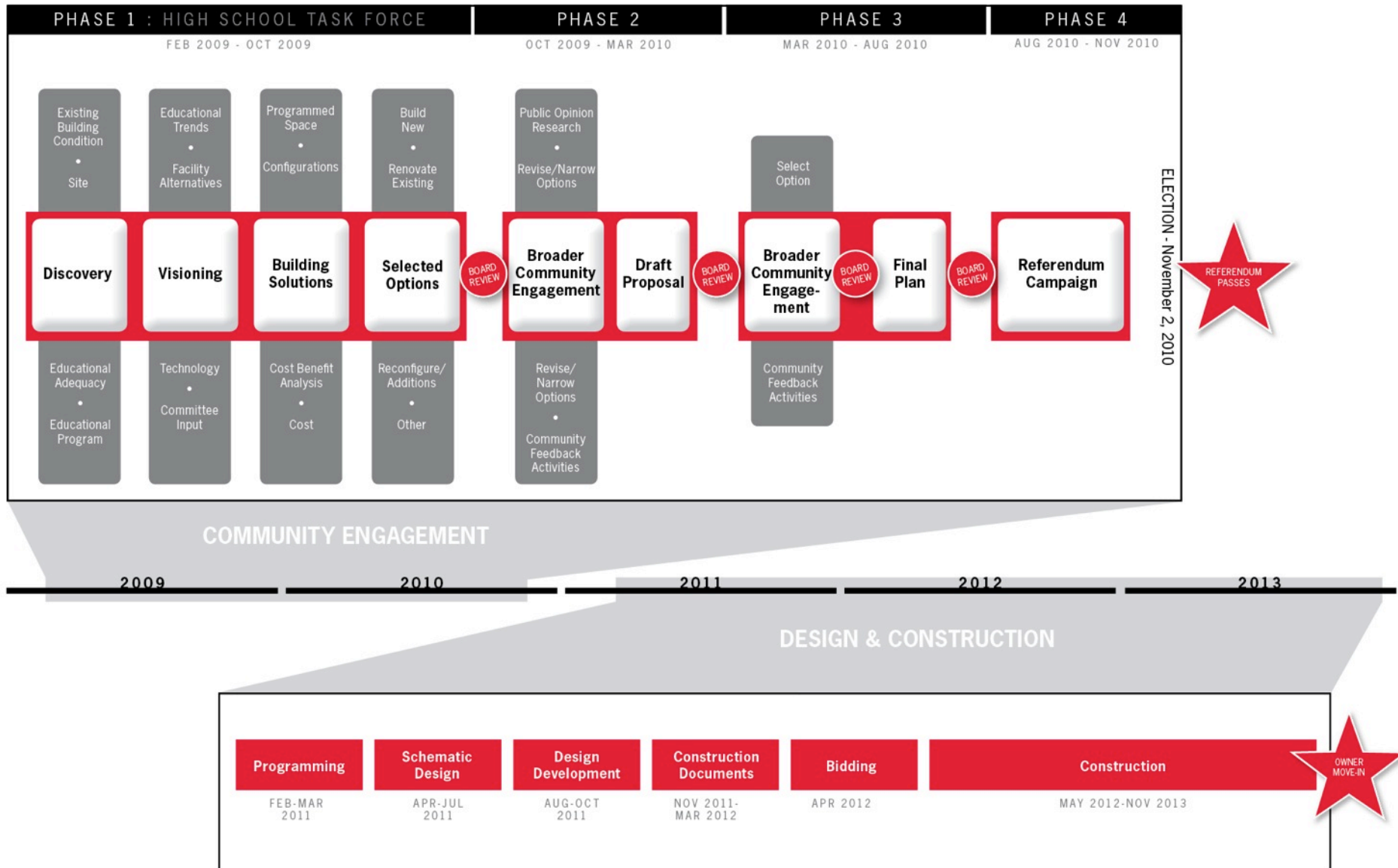
Through a process that integrated public engagement, public opinion research, and communications, community members navigated the issues faced by the board of education, and developed a bold plan for the future. Their journey followed a unique process of invention.

The aspirations for the project were discovered and synthesized during a collaborative process for the development of the educational specification. Through multiple programming work sessions with various stakeholder groups, a vision of the successful environment emerged.

The process produced an educational specification for a 21st century high school for 1,250 students that was “mapped” over the existing facility, identifying areas for remodeling and additions. 100% of the existing building was remodeled, and approximately 10% of additional program space was added to complete the transformation.

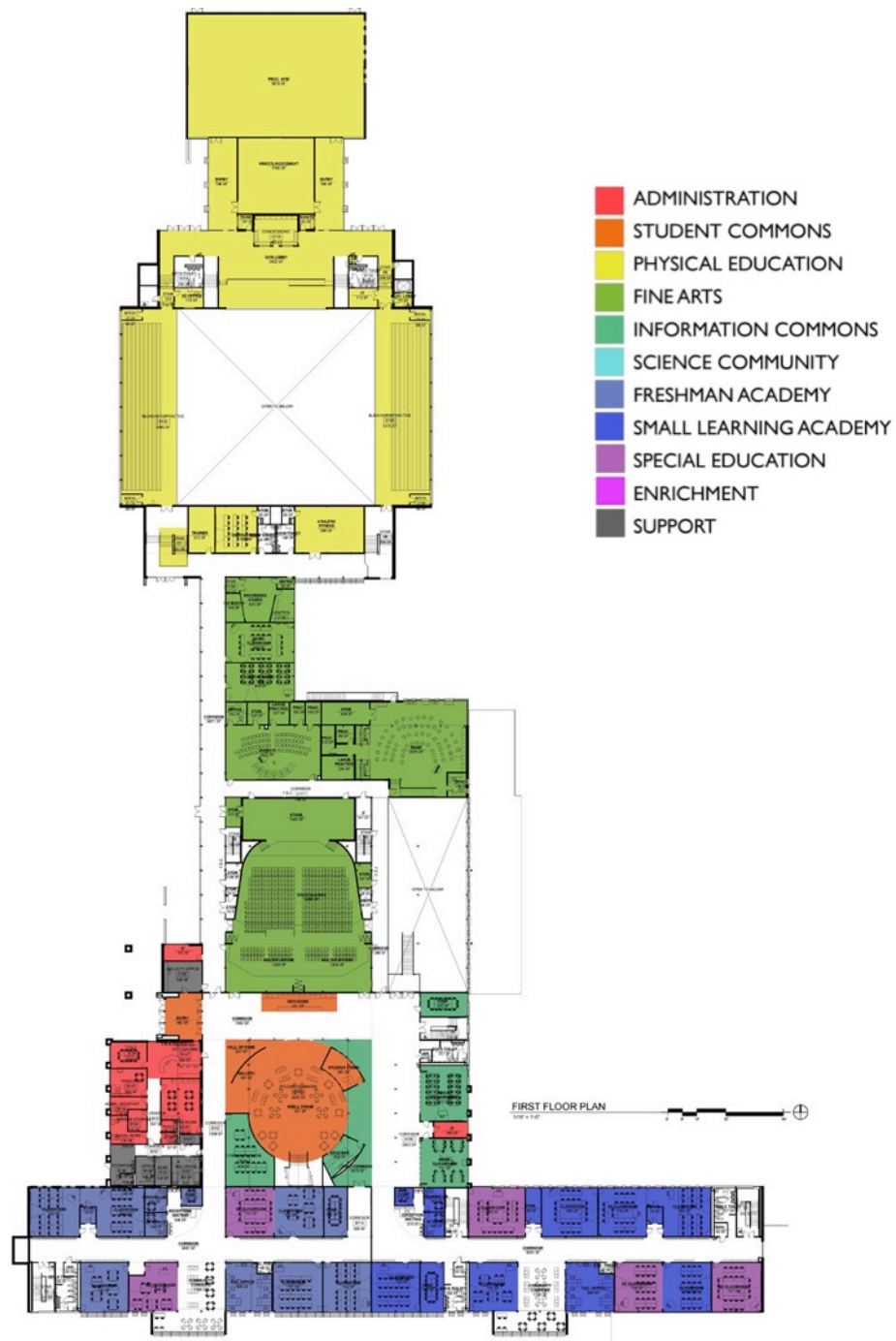
REDEFINING what is possible

Eisenhower High School Process Timeline





LOWER LEVEL FLOOR PLAN
1" = 20'-0"



First Floor

Small Learning Communities

Each SLC has its own entry, its own stair tower exit, and its own **access to the information commons**, the primary active learning and resource space.

The **administrative suite** at the entry to each SLC provide passive surveillance to the entry as well as the community commons collaboration space.

Located at the heart of each SLC, the **community commons** spaces act as the living room for each community, creating a home base, allowing students to feel comfortable and to shape the learning environment to meet their learning needs.

Adjacent to the community commons, the **teacher collaboration and planning** spaces are centrally located and provide passive surveillance in the heart of each SLC.

The core academic areas of the building are organized into **small learning communities** (Freshman Academy, Small Learning Community #1, #2, and #3), as opposed to a departmental organization. Each Small Learning Community is themed, creating a unique sense of place for students in that community.



Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

Project Data

Submitting Firm :	BLDD Architects, Inc.
Project Role	Architect, Educational Planner
Project Contact	Sam Johnson, AIA, LEED AP, REFP
Title	Principal, Director of PreK-12 Design Group
Address	100 Merchant Street
City, State or Province, Country	Decatur, Illinois 62523
Phone	217-429-5105

Joint Partner Firm:	
Project Role	
Project Contact	
Title	
Address	
City, State or Province, Country	
Phone	

Other Firm:	Unicom • ARC
Project Role	Community Engagement
Project Contact	Rod Wright
Title	President
Address	505 South Ewing Avenue
City, State or Province, Country	St. Louis, Missouri 63103
Phone	314-535-4900

Construction Firm:	
Project Role	
Project Contact	
Title	
Address	
City, State or Province, Country	
Phone	

Exhibition of School Planning and Architecture

Project Details

Project Name	Eisenhower High School Reinvention
City	Decatur
State	Illinois
District Name	Decatur Public School District #61
Supt/President	Gloria J. Davis
Occupancy Date	January 2014
Grades Housed	9-12
Capacity(Students)	Designed for 1200 (currently housing 950)
Site Size (acres)	29 acres
Gross Area (sq. ft.)	240,663 s f
Per Occupant(pupil)	253
gross/net please indicate	gross
Design and Build?	No
If yes, Total Cost:	
Includes:	
If no,	
Site Development:	\$ 1,326,000
Building Construction:	\$33,766,771
Fixed Equipment:	\$ 3,917,955
Other:	
Total:	\$39,010,726

Eisenhower High School REINVENTION



The Eisenhower High School environment has been completely reinvented, communicating in complimentary and compelling ways that students are important, community is important, and that this is a **place that can change your life.**

before interior entry



after interior entry

before exterior entry



The new Eisenhower High School is a literal reminder or example of the potential that is within all of us...



after exterior entry



A reminder of how, working together, we can reinvent ourselves to become something more than any of us could have imaged individually...

A reminder that in spite of what others see on the outside, there's an amazing student, school district, community on the inside just waiting to be discovered.