

# HOLLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Holland Public Schools / Holland, MI



*2015 James D. MacConnell Award Submission*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



On the west coast of Michigan, 150 miles north of Chicago, stands picturesque Holland, Michigan. It is a community of more than 30,000 people who rely heavily on three primary industries: agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing. An economic boom in the community throughout the early 2000's was met with growth in options for K-12 education. Private school and charter school opportunities popped up

in Holland and neighboring communities. In 2000, the Holland community was flourishing with an unemployment rate below four percent.

However, the grim reality for Holland's public school district began to unravel, revealing characteristics that were more prevalent in large urban communities than in Holland.



## Holland Public Schools by 2009:

- Average age of school district buildings = 50 years
- Most recent bond request for building/infrastructure improvements = 1988
- Due to declining enrollment, 4 buildings were demolished, and 1 elementary was being used for administration

- In lieu of closing, one district building was transformed into a credit recovery/dropout prevention center for high school students
- 70% of students qualify for free/reduced lunch program

Also in 2009, Holland area unemployment rose to more than 14%.

**EVERY** child can learn...and, provided the right preparation and support, every child can grow into a responsible, contributing, successful adult in the demanding 21st Century international marketplace.



*Superintendent Brian Davis, in his numerous community talks leading up to the bond election.*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Holland superintendent celebrates \$73 million bond approved by voters: 'This changes everything'**

By Greg Chandler | The Grand Rapids Press  
on May 05, 2010 at 1:23 AM, updated May 05, 2010 at 1:24 AM

**Print**

HOLLAND -- Superintendent Brian Davis struggled to keep his emotions in check as he looked at a screen showing that Holland voters approved \$73 million in school bonds to pay for better buildings, computers and athletic facilities.

"I can't even talk," Davis said. "This is just amazing. This changes everything for our community, for our schools."

One bond, at \$60.86 million, funds renovations of Holland High School and the district's four K-7 schools. A second, at \$12.38 million, will turn the former Longfellow Elementary into New Tech High School and upgrade the former Van Raalte Elementary, now home to VR Tech credit recovery program. Heating and cooling systems will also be improved.

The bonds will be paid for by a combined 3.27-mill increase in the district's debt service millage. That translates into a \$327 annual hike for the owner of home with a market value of \$200,000.

School board President Steve Grose said district leaders were wary about asking for the funds in a down economy.

"You're asking for a lot of trust from voters, whether the economy's good or bad," Grose said. "They need to believe in your mission, and they need to believe in your leader. We have a great leader in Brian Davis and I think the community believes in him."

The Holland Public School community had reached a breaking point, and were determined to tackle challenges head-on.

"Not only are our older roofs, boilers, windows and frame, and heating and cooling systems well beyond the Band-Aid fix-ups we've been relying upon, the demands for learning in the 21st century call for

**A Tough Call in Tough Times**

Steve Grose  
Board President, Holland Public Schools  
January 22, 2010

The front page headline in Wednesday's Holland Sentinel (Jan. 20) probably woke you up quicker than that morning than your first cup of coffee. What?? An upcoming \$73 million bond request?? What is the Holland Public School Board thinking???

If this was your reaction, you weren't alone. Our school board did authorize Superintendent Brian Davis to begin the process with the Michigan Department of Treasury so that we could bring forward a comprehensive building bond request on the annual school election ballot in May. Given the depth of the stressful and difficult economic environment we are in, I will concede that our likely request to

**WHAT WOULD IT BUY?**

What a \$73 million bond would be used for in Holland Public Schools

BY STEPHEN KLOOSTERMAN  
stephen.kloosterman@blsind.com  
(616) 546-4258

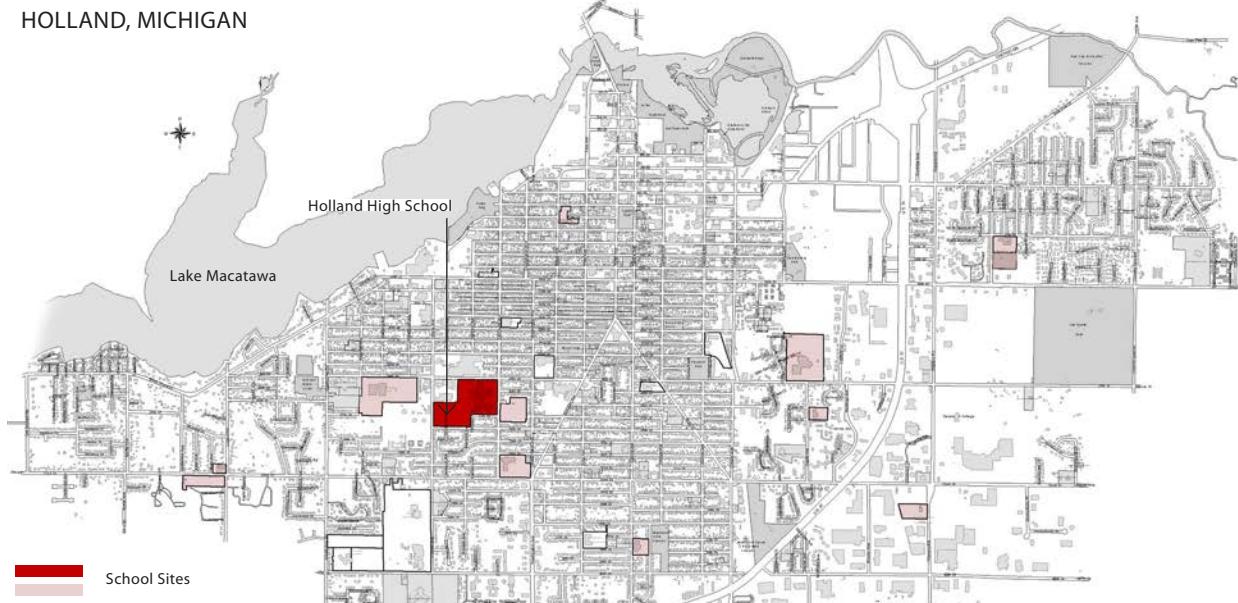
On May 4, voters will decide on two different bond issues proposed by Holland Public Schools. The first, at \$60.86 million, contains system upgrades and remodeling of almost all of the active school buildings besides equipment purchases, and major construction at Holland High School.

School districts or local governments issue bonds when they need money for a big project or other one-time expenses. It's like taking out a home mortgage. The bond vote by the residents authorizes the district to borrow the money — and to levy a tax on property to repay it, plus interest, over time — usually 20 years. The tax rate, or millage, can vary over that time depending on changes in the tax base in a community or interest rates. If total tax base increases, the millage rate might go down, but if property values drop, the millage rate might rise, as in Holland now, because the community is obligated to pay off the debt — some \$73 million in tax revenue to be raised plus interest.

Maintenance and Transportation Center, 701 W. Waverly Road  
\$12.38 million  
Proposal 1: Purchase of 16 school buses.

flexible environments and technology infrastructure well beyond what we can afford to provide." School Board President, Steve Grose.

The collaborative vision of education, government, business, and community leaders brought forth an opportunity for the community to invest in the future. The unwavering dedication of many enabled an



unprecedented \$73 million bond proposal to pass in one of the most challenging economic times Holland had ever seen.

The community voiced their beliefs in the power of education, and committed to invest in their own required to permit the education strategies of teachers and staff at Holland Public Schools come to fruition. The

people of Holland wholeheartedly value the potential of their youngest residents, and realized that there was no better time to invest in their future.

# *Scope of Work*

BUILD 21 a community bands together to support the next generation.



*The campaign for designing, renovating and constructing  
efficient and effective 21st Century learning environments.*

# SCOPE OF WORK = 54% New Development, 46% Re-imagine



Re-imaging Holland High School engulfed nearly \$40 million of the total \$73 million project. At nearly 50 years old, the building did not reflect a sense of pride for the community or for its students. It did, however, reflect a sense of disinterest in education that district leaders began to recognize in students.

Project success required the physical space support the needs of students, teachers, administrators, families, the greater Holland community, and the mission of Holland Public Schools:

Holland Public Schools believes in an uncompromising commitment to student achievement and an



unending quest to maximize student success. In partnership with our parents and community, we provide opportunities and high quality education to ALL students, which will allow them to reach their full potential and prepare them for the future.

School, community, business and parent leaders were steadfast in their desire to provide a learning environment that visually embraced and functionally supported opportunity for students. The team formed the Build 21 campaign, which set out to educate the community regarding key elements in 21st century learning, and the possibilities that exist for students.



*Preparing for 21<sup>ST</sup> Century Learning Together!*

The Build 21 campaign strategically educated all members of the community about the needs of students, who must prepare themselves to succeed in a dynamic, international marketplace. Campaign leaders committed to providing students 21st century learning in flexible, welcoming, creative, safe, energy efficient, good value, and technology supported environments. In turn, students were challenged to grab hold of an opportunity to learn and succeed using their own unique, personal definitions. This community-supported shift in perspective was paramount in driving the design of the new high school.

Overall, the scope of work was defined and supported by the Holland community. And the school district had already begun taking the precursory steps to transform the district.

In an effort to respect the community efforts, focus investment to the future, and provide students an opportunity to engage throughout the project, the Build 21 team sought to have the high school building transformation occur with all 1,400 students remaining in the building. Construction took place in three phases over a three year time period.



## PROJECT DATA

Site Area:	34 acres
Building Square Footage:	303,035 sf
Renovated sf:	139,396 sf
Newly Built sf:	163,639 sf
Project Cost:	\$34 million
Contract Date:	September, 2010
Discovery Process:	May, 2010
Start of Construction:	September, 2011
Construction Complete:	October, 2014

# SCOPE OF WORK

The high school was constructed of steel frame and masonry buildings with brick and glass exterior. Renovations to the existing structure include upgrades to:

- The Dutch Dome basketball and athletic facility
- Safe and secure entry ways and camera installation
- Roof replacements
- Windows and doors
- Performing Arts Center

## Newly constructed spaces include:

- Parking lots, driveways, sidewalks
- Outdoor athletic facilities - tennis courts, baseball and softball fields, track resurfacing, soccer fields, along with restrooms, locker rooms, storage, concession stands and seating
- Cafeteria commons
- Classroom additions and replacement furniture and equipment
- Instructional technology - infrastructure, interactive learning centers, classroom projectors and sound systems, and student technology devices
- Installation of a new geothermal system



SITE PLAN

# *Community Engagement*

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS



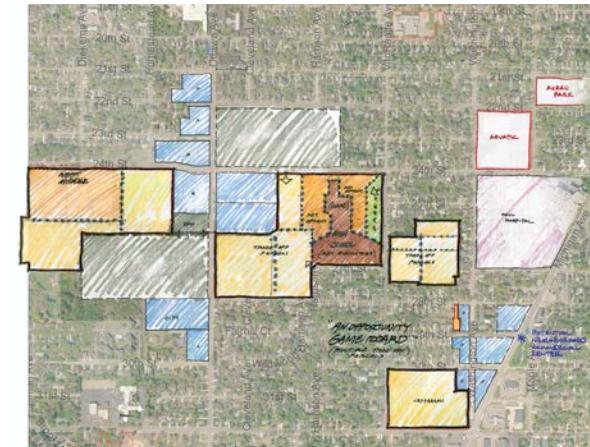
## Holland High School Community

For transformation to be possible, district leaders first needed to convince teachers and staff that change is possible and necessary. Significant attention was placed on staff development utilizing the New Tech network, the Florida Center for Instructional Technology, Communications by Design, and the Institute of Technology Coaches.

District leaders also brought in the business community who helped reconnect teachers with the desired skills needed for students to be successful beyond high school.

Business leaders reinforced a need to hire people who can work in project teams, can creatively solve problems, and can effectively utilize technology.

As conversations continued, trial and error with the curriculum in the classroom began. Teachers began to work less like independent contractors in their own curriculum-based silos, and began to engage in a multi-disciplinary project-based learning approach. In turn, students began to take ownership in their learning and achievements.



## City of Holland Community

Opportunities to impact the physical environment prompted a series of community conversations considering Holland Public School district in the context of the greater Holland area. Dialogue centered around an opportunity game board that identified district facilities as they relate to community facilities.

Hundreds of community, business, government, parent, student and school members participated in charrette-style sessions, along with a variety of meetings, to provide input. The extensive process served as a springboard for a multi-faceted community-focused process throughout the entire



project. The Build 21 volunteer team leveraged radio, social media, video and other communication tools to keep everyone updated on the progress of the community's investment.

The team also learned about the "sacred cows." The classic dome where basketball had been played for 50 years surfaced as critically important to the community. The delicate balance of ushering in new combined with honoring the legacy prevailed during the multitude of community meetings.

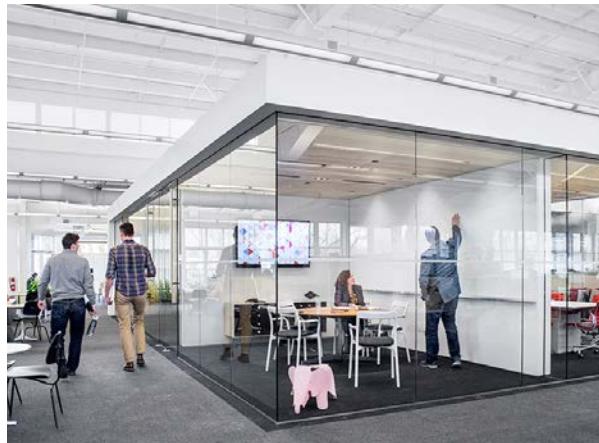
# CHARRETTE



Charrettes were followed by the formation of task teams combining students, teachers, community members and administrators who provided input to elements such as color palette, design of the student commons, technology infrastructure, and preserving historical elements of the school culture. Teams identified opportunities to learn from high schools across the Midwest, as well as from area companies, including office furniture manufacturing giants, Steelcase and Herman Miller.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS



## Business Community

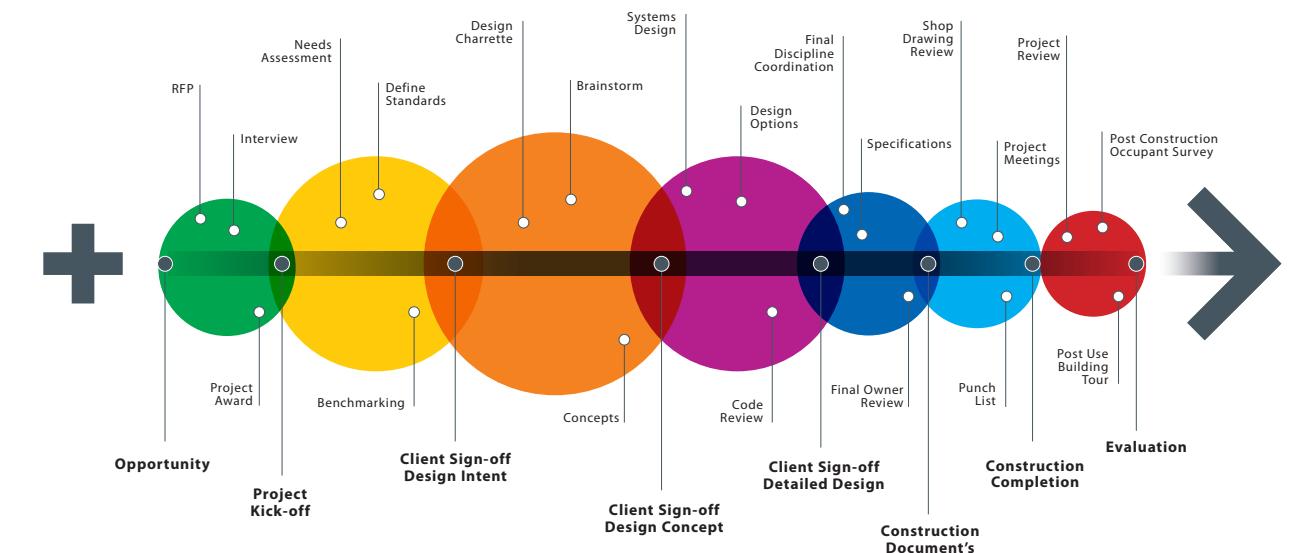
West Michigan is known by many as the capital of the office furniture industry. The largest three companies, Steelcase, Herman Miller and Haworth, are all based within a 30-minute radius. An entire supply chain support structure of companies exists as well.

A cross-functional design team leveraged this wealth of research and experience via field trips, meetings and study. The local companies were eager to support such an effort to enhance the learning for the next generation of talent.

Company representatives from other local industry and service entities participated in design charrettes and a multitude of interactions as well.

## Key Lessons Learned

- Herman Miller Design Yard Tour
  - Don't be afraid to move furniture
  - Students will likely embrace mobility prior to teachers
  - Embrace collaboration
- Steelcase Education Team
  - Offering students opportunity to make more choices will facilitate transition beyond high school
  - Active spaces lead to active learning and active minds
  - Technology integration is key to enable learning anywhere



## Value of Process & Project

The community's value of both the process and project can not be overstated.

Uniting the community in purposeful discussions focused on the future was incredibly challenging at a time when many community members were concerned about their current personal economic stability. Pride combined with an overwhelming desire to help students visualize and realize a successful future, helped the community fully embrace the project.

The process and project have also helped to reinvigorate relations among the school district and government and business leaders. Left in the shadows of non-public school development, Holland Public Schools was quickly spiraling into a district for the uninterested and under performing. The decline in perception was inherent in district facilities. The project has transformed relations with government and business leaders, and students are beginning to experience the impact.

# *Educational Environment*

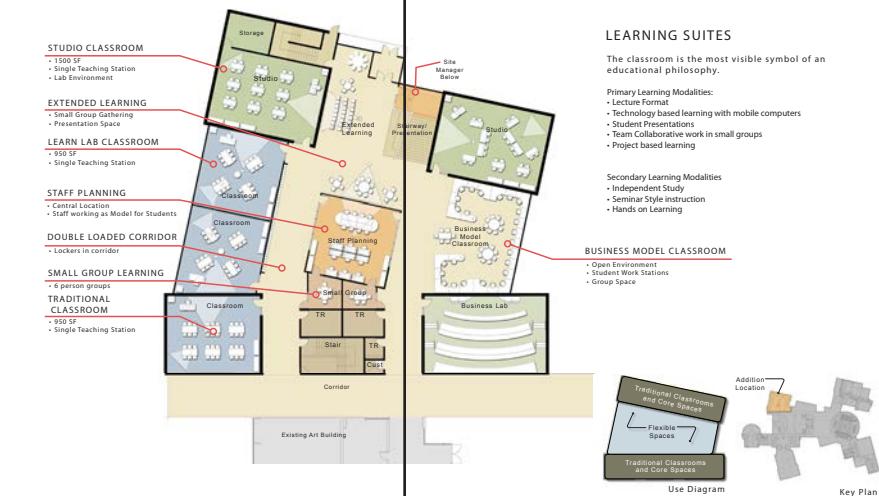
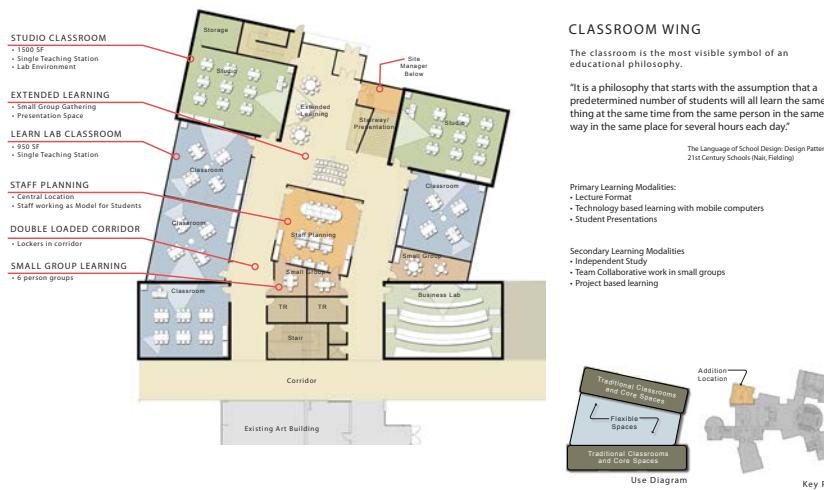
# EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

As part of the educational transformation, the district set forth a set of Learner Outcomes for students:

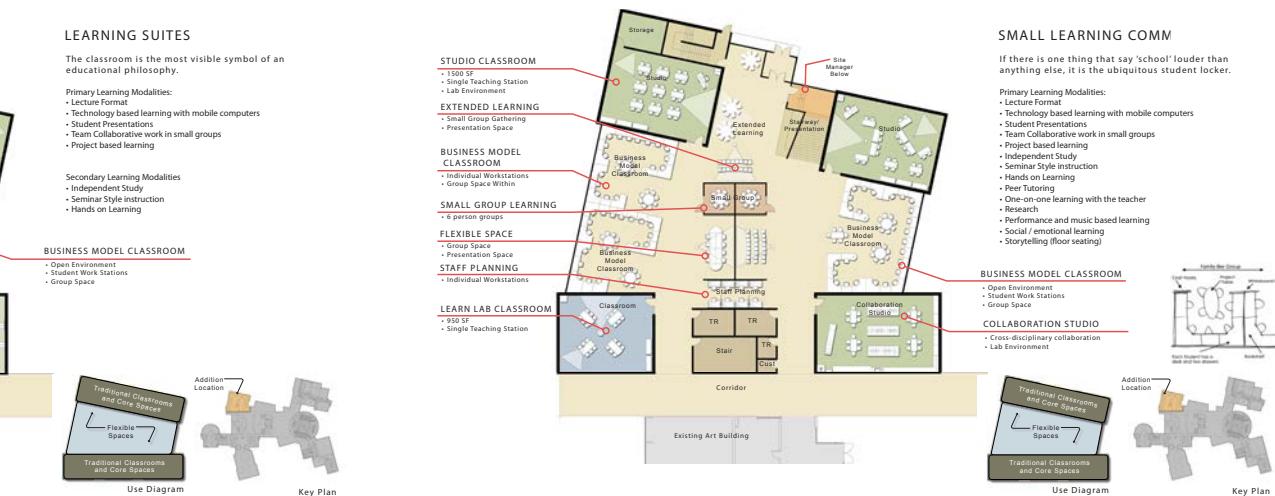
- Effective Communicators
- Complex Thinkers
- Quality Producers
- Responsible Citizens and Leaders
- Self-Directed Learners
- Collaborative Team Members

## Project Goals to Support Learner Outcomes:

- Provide students basic elements to enable learning
  - Consistent heating and cooling systems
  - Comfortable hallways and transition spaces
  - Quiet, comfortable places to learn
  - Easy access to technology support (wireless, charging)
  - Light, bright cafeteria with proper flow and quality food choices
  - Well-ventilated, clean restrooms
  - Safe and secure environment



- Deliver adaptable 21st Century Learning environments
  - Small Learning Communities to deliver
    - \* Lecture format
    - \* Project based learning
    - \* Storytelling
    - \* Peer tutoring
    - \* Independent study
    - \* Team collaboration in small groups
    - \* Business model classrooms
- Foster curriculum transformation for teachers
  - Staff planning individual workstations
  - Teacher collaboration space
- Establish an environment that supports college transition
- Design a campus that the entire community can be proud of



# EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT



## Deliver adaptable 21st Century learning environments

Transitioning to a student-driven education model drove the need for a myriad of learning environments as well as a new model for teacher classroom and office space.

- Lecture-style format akin to collegiate
- Seating areas for small groups
- Purposeful details - special education program relocated to central building location. Did not act as a self-contained program. Students felt part of the school community; easier transition to mainstream education.
- Classroom space that is easily maneuverable for students or teachers as needed - all furniture on wheels.

## Teachers - fostering the educational transformation

To help teachers test classroom design and furniture selection, pilot classrooms were set up throughout the district. Some worked; some did not. Ultimately, teachers and students learned through this trial and error process and were able to articulate their needs based on experience. Upon installation, however, teachers reported a transition time of approximately 6-8 months to truly embrace classroom, gathering space and teacher collaboration concepts.

Engagement by the teachers throughout the process empowered them to continue to manipulate their environment, a habit that most teachers are not accustomed to.

# EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT



## Provide basic elements to enable learning

A highly discussed design decision was to provide carpet in the new, significantly wider hallways.

While not the most maintenance-free solution, the carpet delivered a comfortable, quieter, calm feel. In the new space, teachers began to notice that students were less restless in between classes, and their behavior elevated with the space transformation.

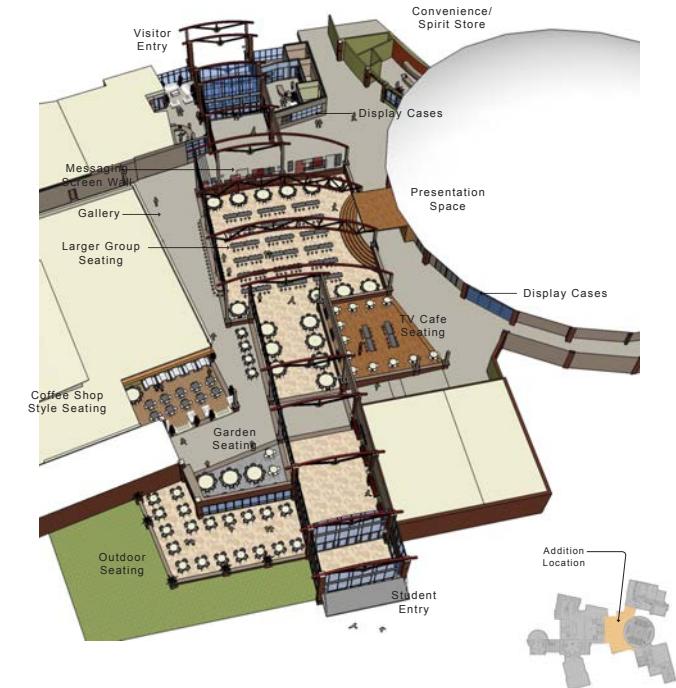
Remaining in the original footprint, a new geothermal system was installed.



## Provide basic elements to enable learning

New technology infrastructure enabled learning anywhere on campus.

At the center of the high school stands the Cafeteria Commons. Offering students a variety of food selections and streamlined flow has led to more students eating on campus, where better choices are made on a multitude of levels.



Equipped with television monitors, a stage and multi-level seating spaces, the Cafeteria is now often used as an extended classroom, for assemblies and award ceremonies, and the Cafe Pops series, casual community performances featuring the high school jazz band and orchestra.

# *Physical Environment*

# PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS

"We were very intentional that the space not be showy. Our community sought a functional building."  
~ Brett Roach, Director of Facilities, Safety and Transportation for Holland Public Schools



## Holland High School

- Shows a connection to the unique community and place
- Is welcoming, warm and safe
- Displays teamwork and trust
- Is for students
- Is fluid and flexible
- Demonstrates a model for students
- Reflects the past while looking to the future
- Celebrates heritage and diversity
- Is environmentally friendly
- Promotes 21st century learning

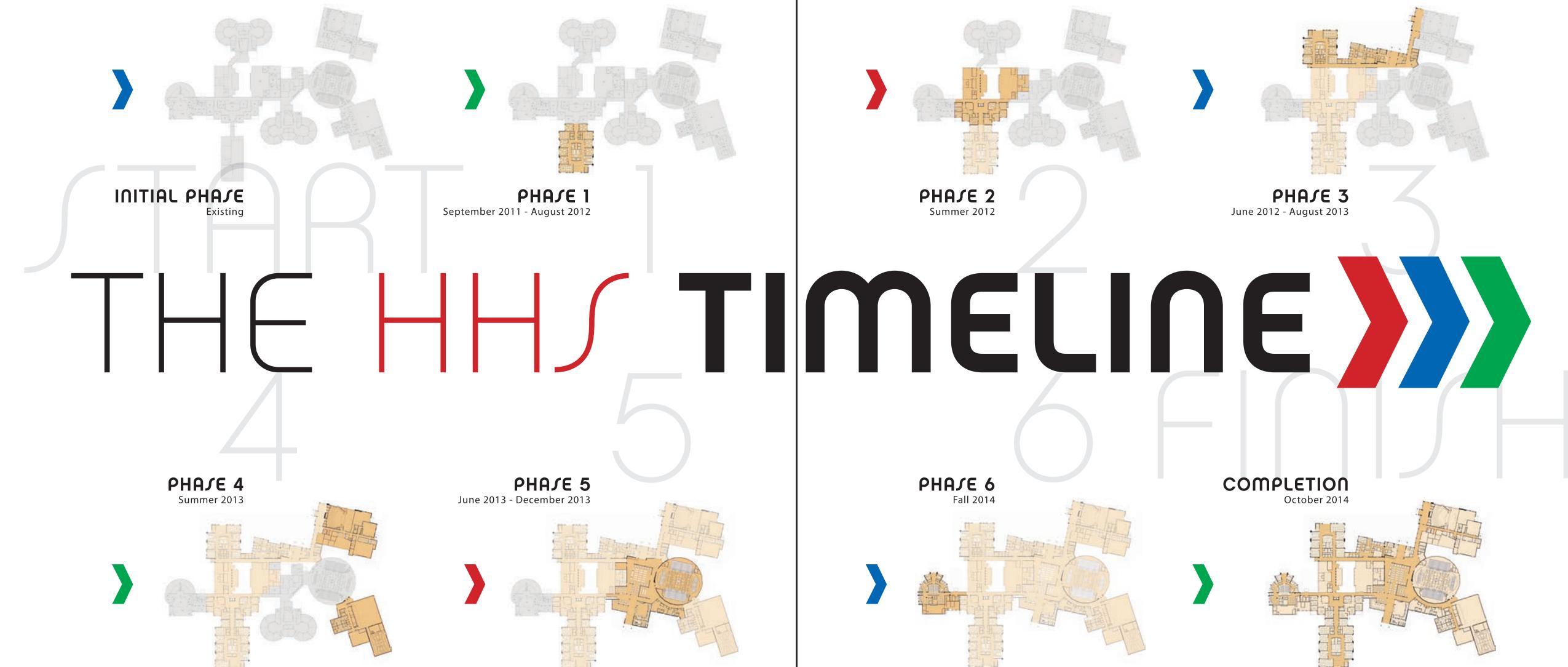


First and foremost, the entire project needed to stay within the existing acreage owned by the district. The design team analyzed opportunities for everyone, from marching band practice space to daytime, evening and event parking to noise management. Utilization of community resources drove the design team to be meticulously purposeful with design decisions that delivered inspiring spaces for students, while remaining visually conservative. The team adopted a theme of using common materials in uncommon ways.

A trial and error design process unfolded an opportunity to implement a four-corner load-bearing approach that enabled the district to remodel interiors in 10-15 years without tackling significant construction.

# PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS

The 3-year construction project needed to occur while students utilized the space - all without the feeling of being on top of one another.



# *Results*

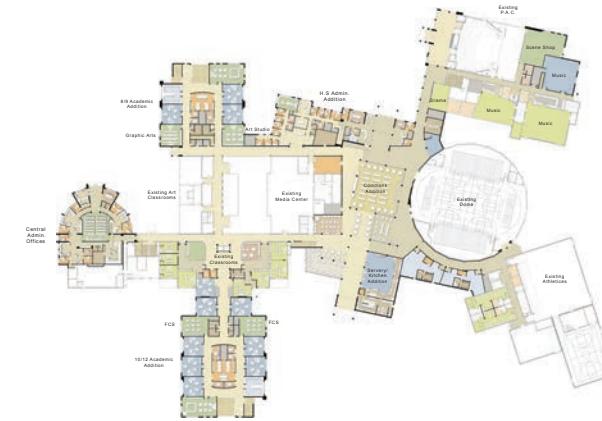
## RESULTS

- Students from 40 countries, who speak 35 different languages attend HHS. All deserve a quality education.
  - Delivered a functional space based on tremendous input
  - Balances community needs and engagement with safety, security and learning goals of students
  - Transformed from an urban city school to a respected school campus

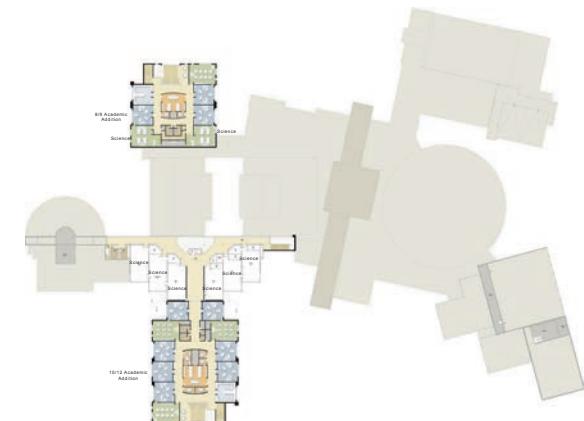


"I am very proud of the fact that we completed the projects on vision, on time , and under budget. Our facilities have become a hallmark of the community and something for which everyone can take great pride in."

*~ Brian Davis, Superintendent, Holland Public Schools*



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



"One original member of the 1960's building team came back and met with me. He said that we should be proud of what we've done. And he told me it was a good use of taxpayer dollars." ~ Brian Davis, Superintendent, Holland Public Schools

# HOLLAND HIGH SCHOOLS

Holland Public Schools / Holland, MI

*2015 James D. MacConnell Award Submission*