



GOAL 6

**RETAIN AND ATTRACT
FAMILIES, TALENT, AND
JOB PROVIDERS WITH HIGH
QUALITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

6 >>

RETAIN AND ATTRACT FAMILIES, TALENT, AND JOB PROVIDERS WITH HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In order to retain and attract families, talent, and job providers to Downtown Grand Rapids and the City as a whole, we must have a strong portfolio of high quality public schools. The future growth and success of our public schools is not just an education issue -- it's an economic development issue, a workforce development issue, and a neighborhood development issue.

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6.1 INCREASE INVESTMENT IN AND EXPANSION OF THEME SCHOOLS AND SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS TO RETAIN AND ATTRACT STUDENTS AND PARENTS AND MEET THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE STUDENT AND CITY POPULATION

- 310 Design, program, and implement the new GRPS Museum School
- 314 Continue investment in Innovation Central and Montessori Schools



319

6.2 BUILD PARTNERSHIPS WITH GRAND RAPIDS INSTITUTIONS TO DEVELOP A LOCALLY-ROOTED WORKFORCE

- 319 Partner with leaders from the fields of business, construction, engineering, and health to build relationships and strengthen quality of instruction at Innovation Central High School
- 319 Continue and reinforce partnership with Grand Rapids Public Museum to provide a unique educational experience at GRPS Museum School
- 319 Continue and reinforce partnerships with City of Grand Rapids and DGRI to find opportunities to retain and attract talent

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6.3 ENSURE HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENTS THAT ENRICH THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE, ELEVATE COMMUNITY INTERACTION, AND CREATE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

- 320 Continue collaboration and investment at Innovation Central High and Montessori campus
- 325 Renovate 54 Jefferson to build an innovative theme school in Downtown Grand Rapids



WHY THIS MATTERS

Attracting and retaining a diverse population that includes families from all socio-economic backgrounds is vital to achieving a sustained Critical Mass in Downtown Grand Rapids. This begins with strategic investment in our City's schools, the expansion of successful PreK-12 programs, and the implementation of new and dynamic programs that can provide exceptional learning opportunities.

The abundance of cultural and educational institutions within the City and the existing framework of collaboration between them can help to forge these educational opportunities and provide a portfolio of educational choices for a wide range of families.

Today, the Grand Rapids Public School system has begun an effective transformation that has resulted in the creation of a sustainable foundation for a new future based on the resources necessary to prepare students for the 21st Century.

By offering quality choices that are academically and financially sustainable, GRPS is shaping a talented workforce that will pay future dividends to the Grand Rapids's economy while also fueling the continued investment and development in the City's neighborhoods.

Figure 6.1 on this page depicts nine Grand Rapids Public Schools within a proximity to the Downtown core that allows them to serve future residents and families in an effective and mean-

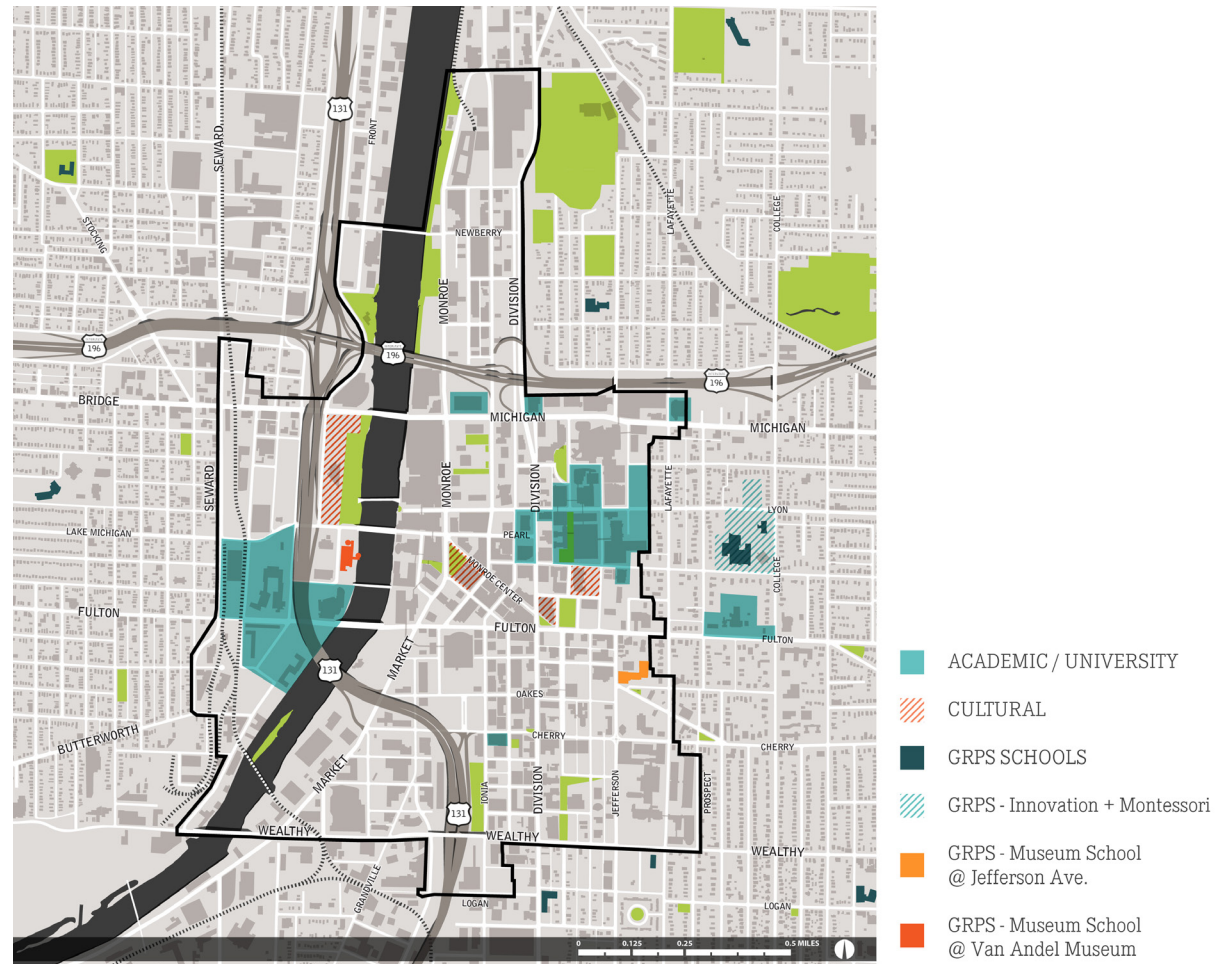


FIG 6.1: Cultural and Educational Institutions

ingful way, while providing choice and access to unique learning opportunities.

Additionally, these public schools share Downtown with universities and cultural institutions that provide an extension of the classroom experience within a walkable context.

This shared and connected urban context is part of the framework for the future success and growth of our schools - and the impetus for the vision established within this Plan.

The Gr Forward Plan envisions two vital components of this academic future.

>> **Museum School:** A newly created place-based school that will eventually provide a 6th through 12th grade experience at the Van Andel Museum Center and at 54 Jefferson Avenue [in the original and historic Art Moderne museum building]. Both of these facilities are located in Downtown Grand Rapids and will provide new educational choices for families in the City.

The Museum school will use design thinking and place-based education to explore real-world problems and challenges through unprecedented access to Museum's vast archives. This place-based curriculum will use the community as a frame of reference by immersing students in local landscapes, cultures, and heritage while forging connections between local and global understandings.



Van Andel Museum Center

>> **Innovation Central and Montessori Campus:** The Plan also envisions a reinvigorated Central High campus a few blocks east in Heritage Hill. This historic campus, now home to four distinct Innovation Academies that focus on preparing students for the 21st Century and a growing Montessori program, is a cornerstone to creating exceptional learning opportunities.

The Innovation Academies and Montessori program will be expanded through programmatic improvements and strategic campus-wide investment. A re-imagined outdoor space will include educational landscapes that provide enhanced sustainability and civic functions, while the two campus buildings will be historically rehabilitated to reinvigorate their stature as community anchors.



Innovation Central

6.1 INCREASE INVESTMENT IN AND EXPANSION OF THEME SCHOOLS AND SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS TO RETAIN AND ATTRACT STUDENTS AND PARENTS AND MEET THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE STUDENT AND CITY POPULATION

DESIGN, PROGRAM, AND IMPLEMENT THE NEW GRPS MUSEUM SCHOOL

An existing partnership between Grand Rapids Public Schools and the Grand Rapids Public Museum has resulted in the IMMERSE program at the Van Andel Museum Center [VAMC]. IMMERSE brings classes to the VAMC for a full

week so that students can use the Museum as their classroom and take their love of learning to a new level. The Museum's IMMERSE Program provides a completely immersive, week-long learning experience for students in grades 2 through 8 from the West Michigan region. The program is intended to help students jump start their development as problem solvers, communicators, collaborators and innovators.

Building on the success of IMMERSE, GRPS and the GRPM have partnered with Grand Valley State University, Kendall College of Art and Design/FSU, DGRI, and the City of Grand Rapids to build a new theme school in Downtown Grand Rapids. The Museum School will eventually provide educational opportunities to students from grades 6 through 12, with grades 6 through 8 at

VAMC and grades 9 through 12 at 54 Jefferson.

Implementation of the Museum school is currently underway, with the first 60 students scheduled to begin classes in the fall of 2015 at VAMC. Subsequent expansion will add a new 60-student class every year, until a full 6th through 12th grade school will be implemented at both buildings in 2021.



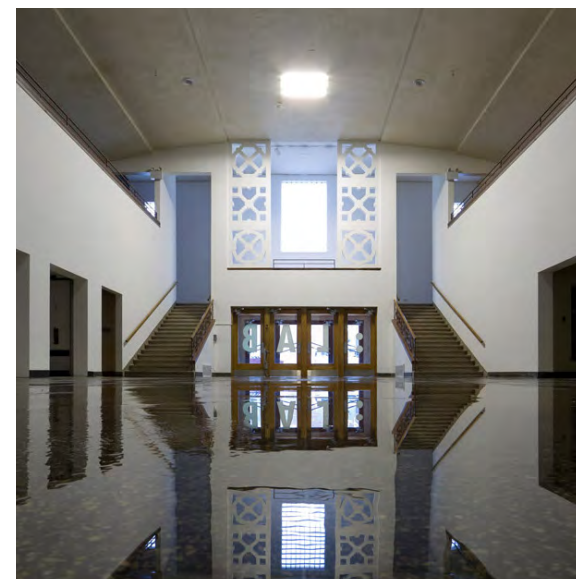
IMMERSE program



Former Grand Rapids Public Museum site at 54 Jefferson



Museum School place-based educational experience



54 Jefferson Great Hall

>> Design and construct 3rd floor space at Van Andel Museum Center to commence first class of 6th graders for school year 2015-2016

During the GR Forward outreach process a collaboration between the GRPM and GRPS resulted in a vision for a phased renovation of VAMC and 54 Jefferson. The first phase of this plan is currently underway with the renovation of the 3rd floor at VAMC. Two existing spaces will be turned into classrooms for the incoming 6th grade, while also still providing space for the successful IMMERSE program.

>> Design and construct 4th floor space at VAMC to continue adding subsequent year classes for school years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018

As the program expands the theme school, the intent is for 6th, 7th and 8th grades to be added to the 4th floor at VAMC in 2016 and 2017. This floor is currently office use for the Museum staff and will require a redesign and reprogramming of the space. Design development that envisions a new school entry to the floor and dynamic flexible state of the art classrooms is currently underway and construction will begin in the fall of 2015.



Museum School place-based educational experience

>> Design and Rehabilitate 54 Jefferson [old Public Museum Building] to prepare for first class of 9th graders in school year 2018-2019

In an effort to cultivate a meaningful place-based educational experience, 9th grade Museum School students will advance to the 54 Jefferson building. Once rehabilitated, the historic museum building will provide a new experience for students and eventually be home to 9th through 12th grade classes by 2021. This building with its great hall, vintage diorama spaces, and direct access to the museum’s archives will provide students with skills in curating and display creation. Student work will periodically be open to the public to provide glimpses into the local culture and heritage.

Design for this phase of work will begin in early 2016 and will include a renovation of the historic structure that will transform it into a state of the art educational institution. Three distinct zones for each class will provide opportunities for diverse learning and hands-on exploration [refer to Figures 6.2 and 6.3], while shared spaces will provide for collaboration.

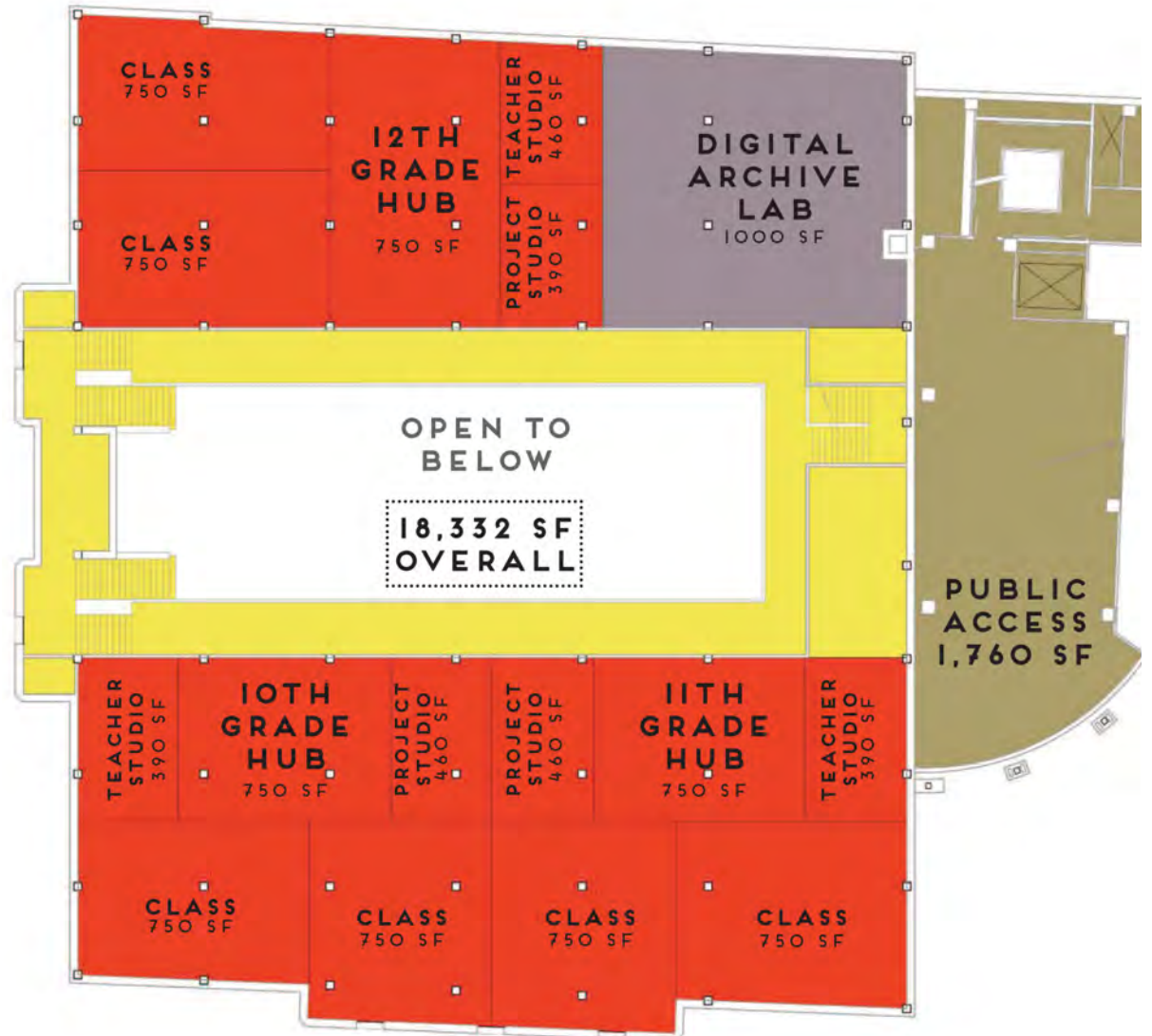


FIG 6.2: Second floor program for 54 Jefferson

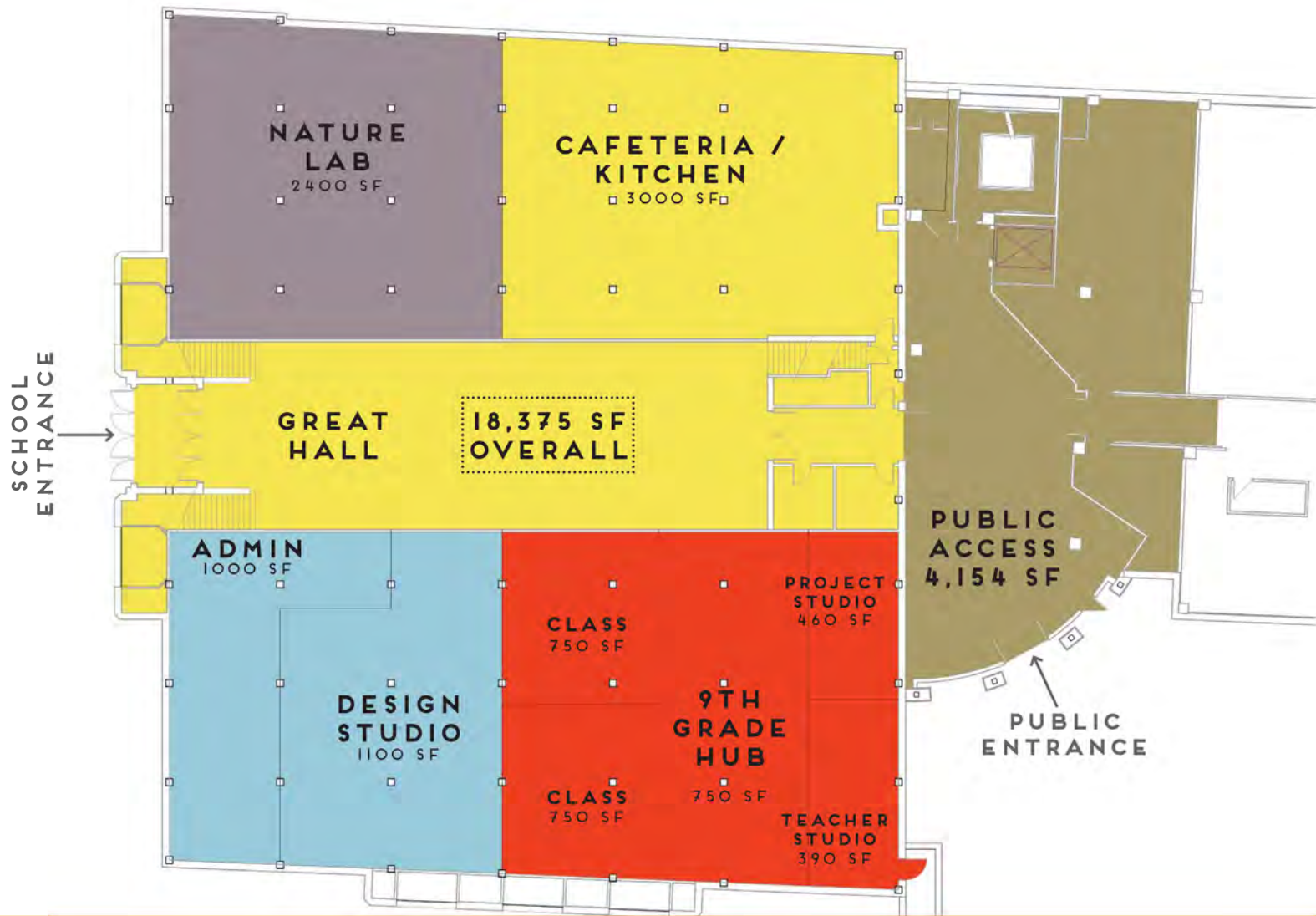


FIG 6.3: Street-level program for 54 Jefferson

CONTINUE INVESTMENT IN INNOVATION CENTRAL AND MONTESSORI SCHOOLS

Investment in both Innovation Central and Grand Rapids Montessori is envisioned to transform these growing programs into exceptional learning environments that provide educational choices for families and rigorous academic training for students.

The five distinct academies on this one campus will continue to provide opportunities for a wide-range of interests and skills that will provide opportunities to contribute in the 21st Century economy.

Careers in health, science, technology, engineering, design, and business can be initiated and

“home-grown” on this campus to provide the future Grand Rapids economy with a supply of knowledge based employees and leaders.

» Enhance 4 academies at Innovation Central High School with state-of-the-art facilities and programming.

Strategic investment in the facilities, classrooms, labs, and workshops of the 4 academies include:

Academy of Business, Leadership, and Entrepreneurship [ABLE]: Modern and engaging collaborative classrooms that use technology and flexible office furniture systems that promote dialogue, discourse, and engaged learning opportunities.



ABLE vision for technology-rich classrooms



ABLE vision for state-of-the-art facilities



ABLE vision for collaborative and flexible classrooms



ABLE vision for a modern business education environment

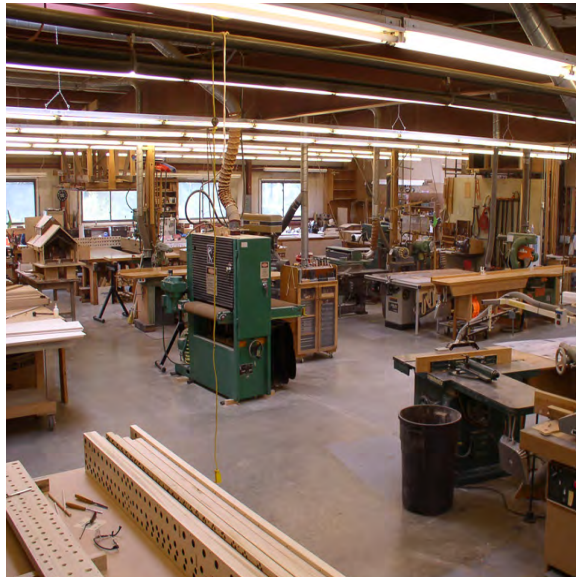
Academy of Design and Construction [ADC]: State-of-the-art workshops and labs that can foster experimentation and innovation in the art of building. These spaces will promote a seamless transition between design and construction that will allow students to create, build, and test in one work area, while also collaborating with peers and mentors on their work. Advanced technology and flexible spaces will promote this dynamic experience.



ADC vision for state-of-the-art workshop for innovation



ADC vision for state-of-the-art workshop for innovation



ADC vision for state-of-the-art workshop for innovation



ADC vision for state-of-the-art workshop for innovation

Academy of Modern Engineering [AME]: Advanced technology, robotics, and 3-d printing will be incorporated into “maker spaces” that promote cutting-edge engineering thinking. This will not be your father’s wood-working shop, but rather a dynamic space full of the latest in machines, gizmos, and technology to help cultivate future engineers.



AME vision for promoting design thinking in engineering



AME vision for maker space



AME vision for maker space



AME vision for maker space

Academy of Health, Science, and Technology [AHST]: Laboratories, emergency rooms, and research facilities make up the classrooms envisioned for this academy. Students will be exposed to the entire spectrum of technology and skills required by the health industry.



AHST vision for hands-on health science learning



AHST vision for state-of-the-art classroom



AHST vision for state-of-the-art classroom



AHST vision the laboratory classroom

>> Maximize use of space to create operational efficiencies and strengthen the quality of instruction.

The layout of the historic Central High School offers opportunities to accommodate the growing academies of Innovation Central. However, some of the existing infrastructure has not been able to accommodate the programs as they have grown and transitioned. During multiple stakeholder meetings with staff and parents, it became apparent that the facility will need significant retrofitting of the existing spaces to create better opportunities. The Plan recommends modifications and upgrades to the existing building to promote more efficient use of the space and allowing each academy to grow independently while still taking advantage of shared and collaborative spaces.

>>Continue and sustain growth of Montessori pre-K through 12 program with dedicated facility upgrades and programming

The growing Montessori program is currently partially housed in the historic Fountain Elementary and partially in the Central High Building. Additionally, the each of the individual grades are not co-located in the most ideal way within the buildings - for instance second and third grades are mixed on a single floor, whereas the preferred solution would be to have each grade on a floor.

Programming recommendations include a short-term modification to the existing buildings and a significantly longer-term investment in the creation of a new building that connects the Central and Fountain buildings

The new structure is envisioned to create spaces for the Montessori high school students while also providing shared spaces between the four Innovation Academies and the Montessori school.

As with Innovation Central, technology investment will be important to the sustained growth of the Montessori program and will need to be considered as facility upgrades occur.



Fountain School, home to GRPS Montessori

6.2 BUILD PARTNERSHIPS WITH GRAND RAPIDS INSTITUTIONS TO DEVELOP A LOCALLY-ROOTED WORKFORCE

PARTNER WITH LEADERS FROM THE FIELDS OF BUSINESS, CONSTRUCTION, ENGINEERING, AND HEALTH TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND STRENGTHEN QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION AT INNOVATION CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

Continue to forge partnerships and foster existing partnerships to build a model private-public partnership that will flourish under the tutelage of leading practitioners, passionate faculty, and engaged students.

The Academy of Health, Science, and Technology should build upon the existing relationship with Spectrum Health, Michigan State University's College of Human Medicine, Life EMS, and the Van Andel Institute by reaching out other corporations in the growing bio/medical presence in Grand Rapids.

The Academy of Modern Engineering should seek partnerships with small scale start-up manufacturers as well as leading edge firms such as Cascade Engineering. This academy may also consider forging relationships in related fields such as industrial design or furniture design through either Kendall College of Art and Design [KCAD] or one of the regional furniture manufacturers.

The Academy of Design and Construction should continue to build relationships with both Ferris and KCAD architectural programs as well as local architects, engineers, landscape architects, planners, urban designers, contractors, and developers, in order to expose students to the vast number of career opportunities in the design and construction field.

The Academy of Business, Leadership, and Entrepreneurship should grow its network of community leaders [from business, non-profit, and community sectors] in order to give students insight into the flexibility of a business career. Additionally, hands on experience in terms of conceiving, implementing, and executing a business could be cultivated through partnerships with the many local small scale start-ups.

CONTINUE AND REINFORCE PARTNERSHIP WITH GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC MUSEUM TO PROVIDE A UNIQUE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AT GRPS MUSEUM SCHOOL

The continued success and unique educational experience of the newly created Museum School will be heavily influenced by access to the Museum's collection and archives. Partnerships and dialogue between GRPS and GRPM will be essential to maintain the close-knit ties that will be required.

CONTINUE AND REINFORCE PARTNERSHIPS WITH CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS AND DGRI TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES TO RETAIN AND ATTRACT TALENT

The City of Grand Rapids owns the Museum structures where the Museum School will operate and it will remain important for both GRPS, GRPM, and the City to remain committed to an open dialogue.

The retention of home-grown talent will become increasingly important in achieving the Critical Mass goals and maintaining a sustainable, well-educated workforce. Because the Museum School, Innovation Central, and Montessori are all within very close proximity to Downtown, DGRI and GRPS should collaborate on opportunities to get students more involved in the Downtown experience.



Student access to Grand Rapids Public Museum archives

6.3 ENSURE HIGH QUALITY ENVIRONMENTS THAT ENRICH THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE, ELEVATE COMMUNITY INTERACTION, AND CREATE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

CONTINUE COLLABORATION AND INVESTMENT AT INNOVATION CENTRAL HIGH AND MONTESSORI CAMPUS

>>Remove obsolete building at the corner of College and Fountain Streets and build corner park that engages neighborhood and provides a gateway to the campus.



Obsolete building at corner of College and Fountain

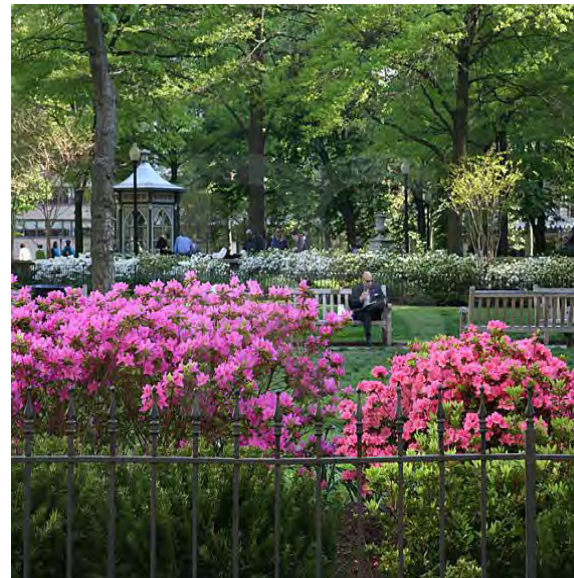
FIG 6.4: Illustrative site plan depicting vision for future Innovation Central Campus



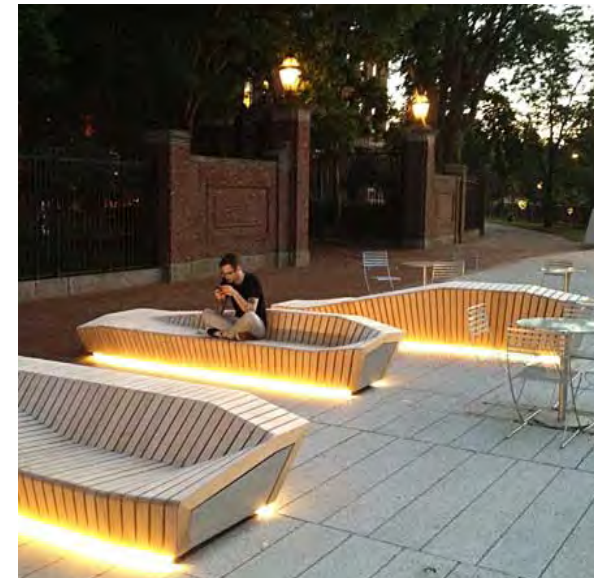
- > Incorporate garden plats and compost areas on the campus to facilitate the erdkinder curriculum and enhance neighborhood interaction
 - > Incorporate silviculture opportunities on the campus
 - > Re-imagine the campus through the use of innovative infiltration-scapes that promote sustainable stormwater management and unique educational experiences
 - > Integrate amphitheater and plaza space on campus for use as outdoor classroom and community space
 - > Create opportunities for integrated outdoor classrooms on campus
 - > Enhance and re-locate existing elementary playground to take advantage of Montessori entrance and drop-off locations
 - > Incorporate playscapes that utilize site amenities and stormwater management systems to create unique opportunities for creative play
 - > Reconfigure on-site parking to strategic locations that minimize impact on the campus and give staff and visitors predictable choices. Additionally, consider “parking forest” concept to minimize hardscapes, reduce heat island effect, manage stormwater, increase tree canopy, and beautify campus
- > As part of a long-term campus plan, design building addition that provides additional space for the expanded Montessori program and new shared common space for all campus programs. New building is envisioned to have a green roof with rooftop solar array and a greenhouse that acts as the main entry to the academic buildings
 - > Modify existing parking and circulation on campus to provide more greenspace and allow for a more permeable and accessible campus edge



Garden plats for erdkinder



Civic green at corner of College and Fountain



Civic and social spaces for neighborhood interaction



Silviculture



Infiltration-scapes



Infiltration-scapes as part of place-based education



Infiltration-scape and outdoor classroom



Outdoor classroom



Integrated playscape and outdoor classroom



Integrated playscape



Integrated playscape



Integrated playscape



Parking forest



Parking forest



Greenhouse as part of long-term building addition



FIG 6.5: *Illustration depicting vision for future Innovation Central Campus*

>> Continue to collaborate with City of Grand Rapids, Heritage Hill neighbors, surrounding institutions [like GRCC], and The Rapid on connectivity and access for the campus

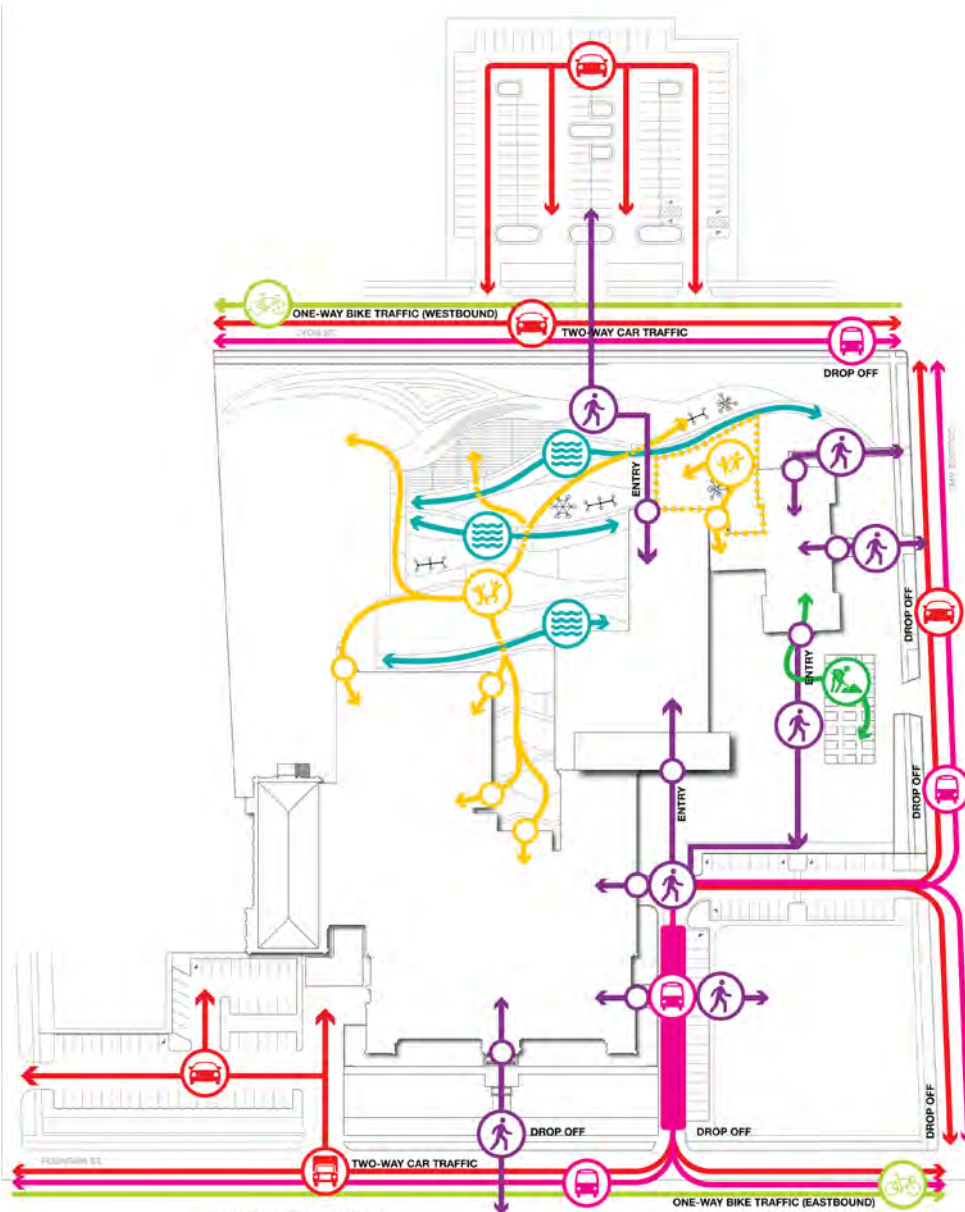
>> Convert the one-way configuration of Fountain and Lyon Streets into two-way multi-modal streets to facilitate better and safer connections to the campus

RENOVATE 54 JEFFERSON TO BUILD AN INNOVATIVE THEME SCHOOL IN DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS

>> Re-invigorate the historic museum building to provide flexible classrooms and dynamic learning spaces

>> Increase connections to the museum’s archived collection to build one-of-a-kind learning opportunities

>> Use the student interaction with the museum collection to build public displays and community interaction



Student access to Grand Rapids Public Museum archives



54 Jefferson rendering, circa 1930's

FIG 6.6: Illustrative connections plan depicting vision for future Innovation Central Campus

6 RETAIN AND ATTRACT FAMILIES, TALENT AND JOB PROVIDERS WITH HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

6.1 Increase investment in and expansion of theme schools and specialized programs to retain and attract students and parents and meet the needs of diverse student and City population

Recommendation	Timeframe	Responsibility / Partners	Source of Funds
Design, program, and implement the new GRPS Museum School @ VAMC	Ist year	GRPS / local institutions / City of Grand Rapids	GRPS / Private & Foundation Support

Initial Action Steps -

Program, design, & construct new 6-8 grade school at VAMC

Program, design, & construct new 6-8 GRPM offices at VAMC

Open school for first 6 grade class fall of 2015

Program new 9-12 grade school at 54 Jefferson

Continue investment in Innovation Central and Montessori Schools	within 5 years	GRPS / City of Grand Rapids	Public
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Initial Action Steps -

Provide maintenance upgrades on existing mechanical & electrical systems

Provide historical restoration maintenance & upgrades to existing building envelopes including windows & brickwork

Demolish old City High building

Begin implementation of Campus Grounds Master Plan

Provide new interior finishes in selected areas

Provide classroom technology upgrades

Provide ADA upgrades

Renovate existing Innovation Central Auditorium

6.2 Build partnerships with Grand Rapids institutions to develop a locally-rooted workforce

Recommendation	Timeframe	Responsibility / Partners	Source of Funds
Partner with leaders from the fields of business, construction, engineering, and health to build relationships and strengthen quality of instruction at Innovation Central High School	within 10 years	GRPS / Health care providers / institutions / local business leaders	Public & Private

Initial Action Steps -

Academy of Health, Science, & Technology to expand relations with growth Grand Rapids bio tech industry

Academy of Modern Engineering to expand relations with start up manufacturers

Academy of Design & Construction to expand relations with local designers and craftspeople to expose students to the many career opportunities in design and construction

Academy of Business, Leadership, & Entrepreneurship to expand relations with business, non-profit, & community organizations to expose students

Continue and reinforce partnership with Grand Rapids Public Museum to provide a unique educational experience at GRPS Museum School	within 10 years	GRPS / local institutions / City of Grand Rapids	GRPS / Private & Foundation Support
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Initial Action Steps -

Expand student and public access to GRPM archives

Expand partnered curriculum development for both Immerse & Museum Schools students

Continue and reinforce partnerships with City of Grand Rapids and DGRI to find opportunities to retain and attract talent	within 10 years	GRPS / local institutions / DGRI / City of Grand Rapids	GRPS / Private & Foundation Support
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Initial Action Steps -

Finalize ownership and operational agreements for 54 Jefferson

Partner with DGRI to integrate students into the broader Downtown community

6.3 Ensure high quality environments that enrich the educational experience, elevate community interaction, and create safe routes to school

Recommendation	Timeframe	Responsibility / Partners	Source of Funds
Continue collaboration and investment at Innovation Central High and Montessori campus	within 10 years	GRPS / Neighbors / Students / Parents / City of Grand Rapids	-

Initial Action Steps -

Continue purposeful and timely engagement with neighbors and HHA

Continue purposeful and timely engagement with students & parents of students

Collaboration between GRPS, Neighbors, & City of Grand Rapids to explore and implement two way traffic solutions, increased transit options, & safe routes to school

Renovate 54 Jefferson to build an innovative theme school in Downtown Grand Rapids	within 5 years	GRPS / local institutions / City of Grand Rapids	GRPS / Private & Foundation Support
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Initial Action Steps -

GRPS & City of Grand Rapids to continue collaboration on ownership of facility & facility upgrades

GRPS & GRPM to continue collaboration on educational partnership opportunities

GRPS & GRPM to continue collaboration on use of spaces at 54 Jefferson & GRPM Archives

Contract with design & construction teams[s]