

The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one.

Mark Twain, American writer



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

VIDE Educational Facility Master Plan

The Virgin Islands Department of Education embraces ALL students and empowers them to achieve their fullest potential.

A New Framework for Education Enabled by Architecture and Design



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A high performance approach to design that is research informed, data driven, and community inspired.

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**How can multiple perspectives
informed by research drive unique
solutions and outcomes?**

School as Ignitor
School as Community
School as Nexus

A Changing Educational Vision

A New Framework for Education School as Ignitor

WHY are we talking about an Educational Facility Master Plan for the Virgin Islands right now?

The upheaval and devastation of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 have required new conversations around resiliency, and student and community needs, revealing incredible opportunities for the Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE).

While natural disasters have always been a part of island experience, the magnitude and frequency of storms like Irma and Maria are new challenges to rebuild using current research findings re:

- (a) industry building standards,
- (b) whole-child development,
- (c) active learning modalities,
- (d) research-guided design solutions,

and beyond to propel VIDE into a future-focused learning model for all citizens.

At this writing, we are 20 years into the 21st century. Yet, too many schools in the U.S. and its territories operate and teach consistent with more antiquated (Industrial Age)¹ methodologies, and our spaces for learning are often designed to reflect these requirements.

In fact, recent archaeological digs (a 4,000 years old Sumatran dig) have uncovered row-by-column marble seating areas with a desk at the front of the rectangular area. These were so iconic, the archeologist^{2,3} labeled the find the classroom, as it represented the predictable layout for an educational setting. No other profession has remained so unchanged! But, change is on the horizon and some district schools are currently changing more rapidly than ever before!

“We may need to be ready for the future sooner than we think.”⁴
The future is here, and future-focused learning experiences are critically needed now.

Field advancements in technology have dramatically impacted the rate of change in the tools we use, the way we communicate, and the methods we might use for teaching and learning. Equally, advances in developmental brain research⁵ provide insights supporting the kinds of relationships and learning opportunities needed to promote children’s well-being, healthy development, and transferable learning conditions. Research further extends knowledge that supporting the whole child,⁶ is critical for life-long learning to evolve. Engagement is also recognized as a high predictor of success⁷ both academically and professionally, and there is correlated evidence that the design of space impacts the ability for individuals to engage; from both the students’ and educators’ perspectives^{8,9}.

We know too that COVID-19 will further push the dialogue of generating an appropriate balance of human connections supporting social, emotional and behavioral development with virtual connections leveraging the availability of long-distance learning and resources.

Evidence relative to blended/flipped-learning opportunities has shown a high level of increasing student engagement and supporting personalized learning.¹⁰

Learning is experienced. Traditionally, these experiences have been housed in a box called a classroom with teachers owning that space. These types of facilities housing passive learning experiences can no longer remain constant, or rigid. Instead, a more holistic, active learning approach has driven changes in the design of built educational environments that work to support improved learning outcomes by explicitly, and intentionally incorporating empirical evidence to support design decision making.

Evidence from some areas include: (a) sensory inputs¹¹, (b) biophilic tenets (i.e., natural daylight¹²; views to the out of doors thus connecting humans to nature¹³), (c) indoor environmental qualities (e.g., appropriate effective ventilation that reduces CO2 levels¹⁴), (d) movement (e.g., activity permissible classrooms¹⁵) and brain science¹⁶, and more.

School as Ignitor



To fully enable the potential of human capital on the island, school must become a place that ignites passion for life-long learning to serve each child holistically.

School as Community



The schools must build community within each campus, each neighborhood, each island, and within the Territories through an equitable use of resources grounded in the local context.

School as Nexus



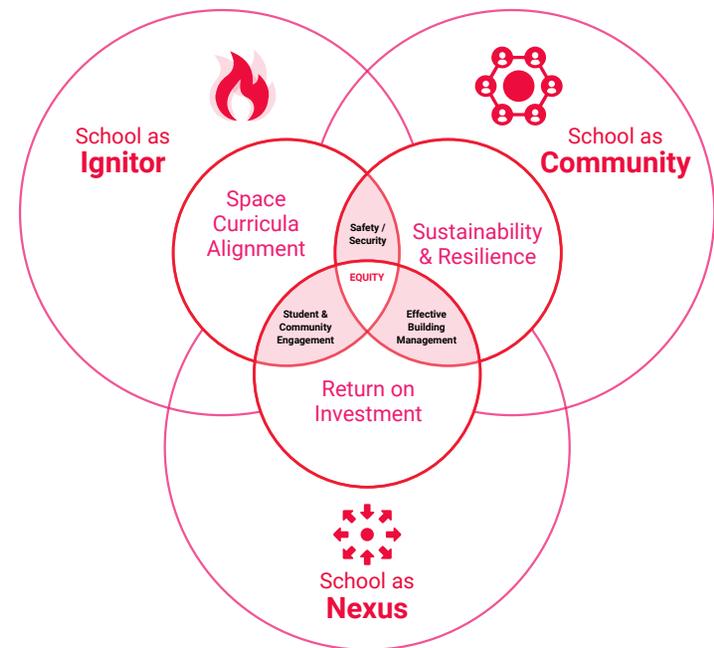
Only then will schools become a nexus for an economic return using integrated best practices, improved operations, and the use of technology to track impact. A nexus becomes a two-way connection between the school system and the broader community.

During the master plan process, important questions become:

How will all citizens of the U.S. Virgin Islands be part of this conversation?

How might this opportunity set a precedent both locally in the Territories and nationally to reinvent education and educational facilities that leverage both economic and social returns on those investments, supporting real learning?

Can school be the “ignitor?”



A New Framework for Education School as Ignitor

School as Ignitor



Research links high levels of engagement for both students and teachers are necessary to improved outcomes¹⁷. However, a Gallup¹⁸ poll found that across the United States, 70% of teachers work with some degree of active disengagement and high levels of stress. Miller, et al (2020)¹⁶ challenged the questions Gallup was asking. His team wondered if the results really were about active disengagement, or about caring too much resulting in burnout? In either case, taking care of teachers is important. But engagement levels change over time. Why?

We know students start with high degrees of engagement in early grades, however it slowly declines to 60% of 12th grade students becoming chronically disengaged¹⁹. Levels of student and teacher engagement must be improved.

Recognizing this challenge, DLR Group partnered with Dr. Lennie Scott-Webber (to act as a third-party researcher) on an engagement study.

The goal was to develop survey tools measuring this research question post-occupancy,

“ Can we demonstrate that the design of the built environment for grades 6-12 impacts student academic engagement levels? *

This multi-year effort provided DLR Group with two proprietary instruments to be used post-occupancy:

- (1) Student Engagement Index™ (SEI™), and
- (2) Teacher Engagement Index™ (TEI™).

* It was important to understand this question from both student and teacher perspectives, and look at two distinct areas of the building. Area one was deemed, “the classroom/or primary learning space,” and area two was the “overall’ building.

A formal scientific research protocol was used. It included having the research design and research ethics reviewed by a third-party Institutional Review Board, and each survey developed was tested in three phases to ensure reliability and validity of each survey instrument.

Schools designed by DLR Group across the USA were used as convenience samples. The cohorts of study moved from grades 9-12 for phases 1-3, and to 6-8 for phase 4. Each effort was submitted for peer-review; now published in several journal articles^{20,21,22,23} along with numerous conference presentations sharing the findings.

The correlation that space impacts student academic engagement levels held a high rate of statistical significance ($p > .0001$). These studies now included nearly 7,000 students and 800 educators – no small study.

Data has consistently shown the highest indicators of engagement correlate with the following key findings:

From the students' perspective...

The more students perceived that the school values creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking (the 4Cs), then they believed they would have higher levels of academic engagement – higher learning outcomes.

The more students see the design of their classrooms as supportive of mental focus and physical comfort and wellbeing, the higher their level of engagement was likely to be.

The students' comfort or discomfort was not always apparent to teachers; students may be unable to move seats, or change postures, or alter the temperature in the room when uncomfortable, but they still experience it internally as a distraction from learning.

The students realized they needed to move around physically to be actively engaged in their learning process. When that was possible, they indicated they would have higher engagement levels.

Student engagement was more strongly associated with satisfaction with the building's design than was the teachers'.

From the teachers' perspective...

Teachers also indicated their belief that the design of the built space made a difference in their students' academic levels of engagement.

Teachers were asked about how the designs supported them in their work. Although they recognized design was important, they gave a higher priority to the need for a good cultural work climate from the organization itself. The key here is that school is the place where teachers go to work, and therefore the culture is more meaningful to them.

A New Framework for Education School as Ignitor

A Changing Educational Vision

To support the Virgin Island Department of Education's initiative to better define their curricular vision, DLR Group scheduled a number of master planning workshops to focus on the needed alignment between curriculum and architecture.

During the master planning workshops, three priorities to align space and curriculum rose to the top. These included providing more:

- 1) Consistent implementation of inquiry-based learning³⁷
- 2) Special interest courses for improved student engagement, and
- 3) Applied learning opportunities supporting life and career successes.

Learning is constant and there are multiple pathways to follow.



Consistent implementation of inquiry-based learning:

Learning designed around inquiry is a more authentic form of learning that includes individual research, group collaboration, hands-on exploration, and culminates with clear evidence of learning.

These different activities require new spaces of varying sizes and qualities. These spaces will be implemented in new and renovated campuses organized in groups, called "learning suites", to enable positive relationship building.

Special interest courses for improved student engagement:

Additionally, magnet high school options will be introduced at St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas to supplement the comprehensive high schools by providing smaller scaled, applied learning experiences.

These specialty schools will give students choice to focus on the: (a) natural resources related to eco-tourism and the maritime environment unique to the U.S. Virgin Islands, (b) sports and the potential of sports tourism, and (c) performing arts reflecting the unique culture of the people of St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John.

Applied learning opportunities supporting life and career successes:

In addition, students will be given the choice to be career and/or college ready through the development of career and technical education (CTE) courses uniquely tied to the local business economy such as logistics/support for the movement of people and goods (i.e., automotive, aviation, and maritime), health and wellness (including everything from nursing to cosmetology), infrastructure (construction to maintenance of building systems), hospitality and business and entrepreneurship. These course offerings will allow students to be engaged in an education focused on their passions. Each island will maintain its uniqueness, but grow as one community.

Jane E. Tuitt Garden Party

Students, parents, teachers, and administrators come together to continue developing their school garden; a campus beautification project that digs deeper to help students develop an active role in their nutrition.



Complex Science National Honor Society Hike to Bodkin Mill
St. Croix Educational Complex High School Science National Honor Society members participated in a hike to Bodkin Mill, escorted by Professor Olassie Davis of the University of the Virgin Islands.

Annual Coal Pot Competition

Students from various schools across the territory come together to learn how to cook local cuisine using the traditional coal pot technique. Guided by their coaches, students worked in teams to create stunning dishes using the traditional cooking technique.



A New Framework for Education School as Ignitor

School as Community



Community is defined as “the people of a district considered collectively, especially in the context of social values and responsibilities.”

It is a basic human right to have the opportunity to learn. However, when windows are no longer operable and block natural light and ventilation, furniture and technology are outdated or highly damaged, indoor air quality is poor due to moisture and mold, and entire facilities are no longer habitable because of structural damage, or the only teaching method offered is didactic, then effective learning is diminished, or at worst shut down³⁸.

The Engagement Indexes (SEI/TEI) findings helped generate the space curricula alignment indicator’s ten tenets, which were used to evaluate VIDE campuses. The evaluations of these have important implications and opportunities for future teaching and learning, as well as new design solutions for the built environment.

VIDE schools may become a community resource with shared facilities, with zoned public use in easily secured areas. New and renovated campuses will invoke a sense of pride and engage students with the promotion of strategic color palettes, light, and displays of learning.

Flexible and innovative learning environments will allow deep learning to happen in varying forms, settings, and groupings, and also be able to adapt to changing educational delivery methods and practices. Comfortable, healthy, and energy efficient facilities support user engagement and save money.

To reinforce the collective community, this master plan ensures there is a balance in the quality of resources between current schools and new schools.

This priority on equity is founded in the cultural, economic, and social framework of the Virgin Islands. Every campus was engaged in the dialogue to best understand their specific current and future needs.

It was also deemed a priority that the built environment utilize vernacular architecture to respond appropriately to environmental concerns, and that the skills, expertise, and voices of local businesses are leveraged: The school will become the community’s nexus.

School as Nexus



If schools are nexus points shaping our communities, which in-turn shape our schools, then the following methods should be implemented to propel the Virgin Islands to become future focused learning settings. First, the health, safety, and security of our students, teachers, and staff are a priority. Second, best practices require that VIDE must right-size the amount of space and resources allocated to current and projected enrollments. This requirement means the team took a hard look at population movement, patterns, and needs. The district is reducing the number of campuses in order to focus attention and efforts on providing the best life-cycle return on investment both socially and operationally to the community. A new PreK-8 grade model will be introduced as a proactive intervention addressing academic and behavioral issues and concerns. This Pre-K-8 change allows students and educators to build stronger, positive relationships over time within smaller communities.

New and modernized schools will employ integrated design, assessment, operation and management principles. The recommendations and strategies for sustainability and resiliency are being proposed within the context of the life span and relative ability of components of a building to change over time.

This concept is known as the Six Layers of Change defined as: Site, Structure, Skin, Systems, Space Plan and Stuff. Each layer will be planned with a long view to the future and an understanding that these school facilities will be subjected to natural hazard events such as high winds, flooding, and earthquakes, as well as the continuous effects of a tropical island climate including sun radiation, high humidity, high levels of rain fall and sea-salted air.

Likewise, the design will support indoor-outdoor connections taking advantage of the trade winds and the natural environment. The short-term layers will be able to adapt and change in response to the curriculum, learning needs, and encourage collaborations and connections between student-to-student, student-to-teacher, and teacher-to-teacher ones.

COVID-19 experiences also made educational entities realize a seamless, blended learning/flip program is also important to integrate. These changes will happen daily as well as change that may happen in 10-15 years as pedagogy or the student population changes. Technology will be used to implement ongoing assessments to provide factual and current data on the effectiveness and impact of practice.

A New Framework for Education School as Ignitor

Summary

In summary, the Educational Facilities Master Plan will meet VIDE's seven guiding principles by creating schools that:

- Support the whole child's development across time
- Ensure equity across all venues and deliveries
- Integrate technology supporting in-class and online needs
- Use technology to assess impact
- Provide for the health, safety, and welfare of all
- Make sure cultural, local and economic competence and resilience issues are addressed
- Integrate design, assessment, operations and management seamlessly.

DLR Group's team will do that by igniting a passion for learning for all, building community within the school and between schools, creating a nexus of economic return, and incorporating research evidence to inform design solutions.

This document provides an overall framework that can be phased over time to revitalize and provide future-facing educational facilities that match the aspirations of all Virgin Islanders.

Across all three islands, there are 32 existing educational facility sites. The Educational Facility Master Plan significantly reduces the number of sites to 18.

In the following pages you will learn about the process that students, community members, government officials, teachers, principals, and district staff participated in to discover, develop, and define this framework.

The data-driven process started with campus walks with principals to assess the current facility inventory and each campus' appropriateness for the desired future-facing learning. Visioning workshops empowered participants to define goals for teaching and learning, technology, furniture, sustainability, and safety and security. Advancement opportunities synthesizes the information collected and applies solutions that provide the District with future-facing facilities that allow for a 20% growth rate over the next decade. Cost summary and schedule provide an overview of funding requirements in a phased sequence that recognizes the overall construction realities of building in the territory.

Executive Summary

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Unique Solutions and Outcomes

VIDE Public Schools: New Builds on the Islands

The following schools have been identified as candidates for replacement/new builds:

St. Croix

Arthur Richards PreK-8 @ Evelyn M. Williams Elementary School Site - New Build



Existing Footprint:
128,836 GSF

Evelyn M. Williams Elementary School, is currently closed and shuttered with no students. The campus contains square buildings, at various stages of disrepair, surrounding a central courtyard. It is scheduled to be demolished the Summer of 2020 in order to facilitate construction of the new Arthur Richards PreK-8 facility, slated to be one of the first projects implemented.

New campus features:
Outdoor learning and staggered learning suites

Alfredo Andrews PreK-8 Elementary School - New Build



Existing Footprint:
56,450 GSF

Alfredo Andrews Elementary School currently serves grades K-6.

The new proposal will support grades PreK-8 in a new replacement school to be located on the existing site.

New campus features:
Space for outdoor learning & play,
commons & gym (covered but partially outdoors)

St. Croix Central High School - New Build



Existing Footprint:
164,803 GSF

St. Croix Central High School currently serves grades 9-12. The school is comprised of multiple linear buildings on a relatively flat site.

The new proposal will continue to support grades 9-12, but in a new replacement school on the existing site.

New campus features:
Fine arts magnet program

St. Thomas

Ulla F. Muller PreK-8 School - New Build



Existing Footprint:
39,682 GSF

Ulla F. Muller Elementary School currently serves grades K-6. The campus consists of three linear buildings in a u-shape on a relatively flat site.

The new proposal will support grades PreK-8 in a new replacement school located on the existing site.

New campus features:
Campus buildings raised above floodplain and ground level for parking and outdoor play

Charlotte Amalie High School - New Build



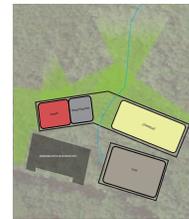
Existing Footprint:
192,908 GSF

Charlotte Amalie High School currently serves grades 9-12. At present, teachers and students are primarily using modular structures on the former playing field. The existing school structures are mostly shuttered in place.

The new proposal will continue to support grades 9-12, but in a new replacement school.

St. John

Julius E. Sprauve PreK-12 School - New Build



Existing Footprint:
52,128 GSF

Julius E. Sprauve Elementary School currently serves grades K-8. The campus sits in an urban setting and a significant percentage of students are currently being served in modulars.

The new proposal will serve grades PreK-12 in a new replacement school located on National Parks Service land, made available through a governmental land swap.

New campus features:
Magnet school with maritime pathways featuring an innovation corridor and water feature

Charlotte Amalie High School - New Build Continued

The existing classroom structures on the western part of the site will be demolished Summer of 2020 to facilitate the phase one construction of the new Charlotte Amalie High School facility, slated to be one of the first projects implemented.

New campus features:
Primary entrance at the top of the site and cascading circulation down the hill on approach to football fields

Unique Solutions and Outcomes

VIDE Public Schools: Modernization/Expansion Projects on the Islands

The following schools have been identified as candidates for modernization/expansion:

St. Croix

Claude O. Markoe PreK-8 School - Modernization/Expansion



Existing Footprint:
91,326 GSF

Claude O. Markoe Elementary School currently serves grades PreK-8. The school is made up of multiple, long, linear buildings on a relatively flat site.

The new proposal will continue to support grades PreK-8 in a modernized, expanded facility.

Features of modernization/expansion:
New gym, new media center and addition to existing commons

Juanita Gardine PreK-8 School - Modernization/Expansion



Existing Footprint:
76,476 GSF

Juanita Gardine Elementary School currently serves Grades K-8. The campus contains multiple, long, linear buildings with green space in between.

The new proposal will include an expansion to support grades PreK-8 in a modernized, expanded facility.

Features of modernization/expansion:
New learning suites & revitalized outdoor learning environments

St. Croix Cont.

Pearl B. Larsen PreK-8 School - Modernization/Expansion



Existing Footprint:
84,359 GSF

Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School currently serves grades PreK-8. This school is one of the few completely enclosed buildings on the island.

The proposal will include an expansion of the current grade structure, PreK-8, in a modernized, expanded facility.

Features of modernization/expansion:
Additions at back of building with plans to activate existing outdoor courtyards

Unique Solutions & Outcomes

VIDE Public Schools: Modernization/Expansion Projects on the Islands

The following schools have been identified as candidates for modernization/expansion:

St. Thomas

Jane E. Tuitt PreK-3 School - Modernization



Existing Footprint:
15,488 GSF

Jane E. Tuitt Elementary School currently serves grades K-5. The campus is composed of small buildings arranged around a central courtyard.

The new proposal will support grades PreK-3.

Features of modernization:
Reorganization of spaces to support new collaborative environments

Joseph Sibilly PreK-3 School - Modernization/Expansion



Existing Footprint:
25,718 GSF

Joseph Sibilly Elementary School currently serves grades K-6. The campus sits in a tropical setting with many changes in topography.

The new proposal will support grades PreK-3.

Features of modernization:
Small addition to commons & reorganization of space to capitalize on existing footprint

Lockhart PreK-8 School - Modernization/Expansion



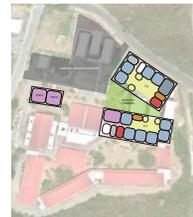
Existing Footprint:
59,530 GSF

Lockhart Elementary School currently serves grades K-3. All of the students are currently in modular structures as the Addelita Cancryn School student population resides in the Lockhart building.

The new proposal will support grades PreK-8 on an expanded campus.

Features of modernization/expansion:
Middle school learning suites & activated outdoor learning environments

Yvonne E. Milliner-Bowsky PreK-8 School - Modernization/Expansion



Existing Footprint:
53,978 GSF

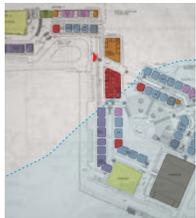
Yvonne E. Milliner-Bowsky Elementary School currently serves grades K-5. The campuses linear buildings create two courtyards with the addition of modular structures.

The new proposal will support grades PreK-8 in an expanded campus.

Features of modernization/expansion:
New middle school learning suites, new gym & improvements for outdoor learning environments

St. Thomas Cont.

Bertha C. Boschulte PreK-8 School - Modernization



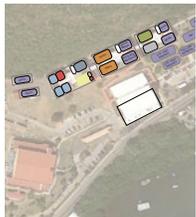
Existing Footprint:
115,870 GSF

Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School currently serves grades 6-8. The campus features a central courtyard and is surrounded by forests.

The new proposal will support grades PreK-8 in a reconfigured campus.

Features of the modernization:
Reorganization of space to support collaborative learning suites & more common areas

Ivanna Eudora Kean High School - Modernization/Expansion



Existing Footprint:
134,313 GSF

Ivanna Eudora Kean High School currently serves grades 9-12. The school has various rectangular buildings arranged in a linear fashion at the top of a hill.

The new proposal will continue to support grades 9-12.

Features of modernization/expansion:
New commons & re-purposing of existing to create a CTE magnet program

Unique Solutions & Outcomes

VIDE Support Facilities: New Builds & Modernization/Expansion Projects on the Islands

The additional support facilities have been identified as candidates for replacement:

St. Croix

St. Croix Educational Complex - Modernization

The St. Croix Educational Complex currently serves grades 9-12, in addition to a section of CTE adults. The campus is comprised of three buildings with large central courtyards.

The new proposal will continue to support grades 9-12 and CTE programming.

Existing Footprint:
314,398 GSF

Features of modernization:
Updated outdoor spaces to utilize courtyards for outdoor learning

John H. Woodson Discovery Center - Modernization

John H. Woodson Junior High School currently serves grades 7-8. The campus contains a grouping of various buildings, each with their own central courtyards.

The new proposal will transition the campus to a Discovery Center.

Existing Footprint:
125,720 GSF

Features of modernization:
New discovery center for the territory

Lew Muckle Elementary School - Modernization

Lew Muckle Elementary School currently serves grades K-6.

Existing Footprint:
49,533 GSF

The new proposal will re-purpose the school as VIDE Headquarters, Curriculum Center, Procurement Warehouse, School Lunch Warehouse, and Special Ed & Maintenance.

St. Thomas-St. John

Wheatley Discovery Center - Modernization/Expansion

The proposal is for the existing, temporary 9th grade center to be re-purposed as a Discovery Center once construction at Charlotte Amalie High School is completed.

Gladys A. Abraham Skills Center (Adult CTE) - Modernization

The Wheatley Skills Center (Adult CTE) is proposed to relocate to the Gladys A. Abraham Elementary site.

This facility is currently closed; no students are on campus.

Existing Footprint:
53,493 GSF

Joseph Gomez Elementary School - Modernization

Joseph Gomez Elementary School currently serves grades K-5.

The new proposal will re-purpose the school as VIDE Headquarters, Curriculum Center, Procurement Warehouse & School Lunch Warehouse.

Note:

Warehouse Space at DPP Property in Crown Bay is being explored.

Existing Footprint:
61,266 GSF

Leonard Dober Elementary School - Modernization

The Leonard Dober Elementary School is currently closed and no students are on campus.

The new proposal will re-purpose the campus as a cultural center.

Features of modernization:
New cultural center for the territory

Existing Footprint:
18,080 GSF