

What are 21st century learning spaces?

21st century learning spaces are flexible learning areas conducive to different learning styles and instructional strategies. Today's rapidly changing, interconnected world requires that current and future students know how to think differently, work differently and learn differently.

21st century learning spaces accommodate the unique learning needs of every student and support the positive human relationships needed for effective learning, both formal and informal. They enable students to learn in relevant, real-world 21st century contexts through project-based work.

Creating these types of learning spaces also helps children grow emotionally, socially and physically. Academic achievement, as research from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) shows, is inextricably intertwined with social, emotional, and physical health. Thus, 21st century learning environments address the multiple and interconnected learning needs of the whole child.

21st century learning spaces also support professional learning communities that enable educators to collaborate, share best practices, and integrate 21st century skills into classroom practice. [21st century district overview](#).

Flexibility is Key

Since no one can predict how educational technologies and teaching modalities will evolve, learning spaces must adapt to whatever changes the future may hold. To achieve this flexibility, many classrooms have moveable furniture and walls that can easily be reconfigured for different class sizes and subjects and promotes social interactions.

Technology

Factoring technology into design is also an important part of planning for today's learning environments. A 21st century learning environment blends physical and digital infrastructures to seamlessly support learning, melding face-to-face with blended and online learning. These learning spaces allow equitable access to quality learning tools and technologies, and include space for group, team and individual learning. Some of the most notable ways that technology can enhance student learning and promote 21st century skills include:

- Promoting greater student achievement
- Increasing student engagement
- Assessing student performance
- Facilitating communication and collaboration
- Maximizing administrative effectiveness
- Building student proficiencies in 21st Century skills

Minnesota Center for Advanced Professional Studies (MNCAPS)

The MNCAPS program is a partnership between Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools and Lakeville Area Public Schools. MNCAPS is a nationally recognized, innovative high school program. Students fast-forward into their future and are fully immersed in a professional culture, solving real-world problems, using industry standard tools and are mentored by actual employers, all while receiving high school and college credit.

MNCAPS is an example of how business, community and public education can partner to produce personalized learning experiences and educate the workforce of tomorrow, especially in high skill, high-demand jobs. MNCAPS employs case studies and project-based learning to give students exposure to growing industries and potential career options. Students receive hands-on learning experiences in the business and healthcare fields. They also have opportunities to learn from guest instructors and will be matched with mentors. The program builds upon Prior Lake High School's existing Fab Lab and E-STEM programming and is open to all juniors and seniors in the Prior Lake-Savage and Lakeville Area Public school districts.



Prior Lake High School Addition

The Prior Lake High School expansion, which opened in 2014, is an example of flexible design space that can be used in many different ways to accommodate many styles of student learning and prepare students for college and today's work force. PLHS also has a dedicated space for a Fab Lab, a small-scale fabrication laboratory which allows students to create almost anything using some of the same technology and equipment found in Minnesota businesses and used by today's work force.



Resource: [Partnership for 21st Century Learning](#)