Exploring the 21st Century Library Facility and Program  
NYC DOE Office of Library Services

The overarching goals of participatory design are:
1. To develop cutting edge library media centers that meet the diverse instructional needs of students and
2. To use the visioning process to build school community excitement about literacy, inquiry and learning.

The LMC21 initiative empowers school leaders, librarians, teachers, students, parents and community partners to see themselves as library advocates and change agents.

The process is comprised of four sessions over several months and help the school community re-envision their libraries into innovative 21st century library media centers. The administrators, library media specialist, selected teachers, parents and students will participate in sessions designed to help them rethink their libraries as centers of inquiry, instruction, learning and technology. Participants engage in a process resulting in a plan of how the renovated shared school library would look and operate. From these planning sessions and the participatory design process, the school community approves a renovation design of their facility as well as uses their new understanding to build a school library media center that supports and fosters literacy, inquiry, technology and information access for all students in their school.

**Participatory Design Sessions**

**Session 1: Creating a 21st century School Library Media Center**
Prior to the session school leaders appoint a Library Advisory Council (LAC) to help guide the process to conclusion. The LAC is made up of the librarian, teachers, principals, parents and student leaders. The first session is designed to provide the LAC with a deeper understanding of an effective 21st century technology rich library media center in an elementary school. Best practices, policies and procedures, technology requirements, library allocation, staffing, facilities usage, state and local laws, and design and renovation options will be explored. The facilitator introduces the participatory design process and shares slides of library renovations offering possibilities and food for thought to the school stakeholders.

**Session 2: Asset Mapping the Media Center**
In this session, participants assess the current library assets and needs, using the Essential Elements of an Effective Library Program rubric and the LMC21: Powering up Library Media Centers for the 21st Century attributes rating guide. The facilitator pairs the participants and invites them to walk around the library and using chart paper literally begin to sketch out ideas for what the redesigned space would look like. The facilitator then guides the group through a share out of their ideas and consideration as to what might actually be feasible in the redesign. Stakeholders’ suggestions are shared and recorded.

**Session 3: Participatory design for a 21st century school library media center**
The facilitator returns with three real designs based on the previous session’s ideas and drawings presented by the LAC members. Three computer drawings are presented for discussion and recommendations each incorporating more or less of the suggestions that came out of session two.

Following discussion, the group comes to consensus on all the elements they would like to see incorporated into their new library.

**Sessions 4: A design is chosen for the new Library**

Working with the facilitator, designers and funders this session begins the final participatory design planning process around creating a modern, functional, inviting, comfortable, accessible library media center. Three designs are presented to the utilizing ideas that incorporate the realities of the actual space against the capital money available for renovation. The school’s LAC members via their collaboration choose the design model that best reflects and incorporates the vision and mission the school. The design is set and the work of renovation can begin.