

Project Profile

Verona High School



Cafeteria

Location

234 Wildcat Way
Verona, WI USA

Industry

K-12 Education

Size

590,000 SF

Number of Students

2,200

Completion

2020

Furniture Dealer

Henricksen

Design Firm

Eppstein Uhen Architects

Owner's Representative

Huffman Facility
Development

General Contractor

Findorff

Installer

Systems Furniture
Installations (SFI)

Photographer

Tricia Shay Photography



Library

As part of the master plan for the Verona Area School District, a new 590,000 square foot high school campus was constructed on 161-acres that includes a 3-story academic building built for a capacity of 2,200 students, a 1,000-seat performing arts center, a field house, athletic fields, a swimming pool and a separate, public pool.

An additional part of the master plan included converting the old high school to serve as the district's new middle school. All of the existing furniture stayed with that building, which meant in the new space all of the classrooms, administrative areas, the library, the labs, and the atrium had to be furnished with new furniture.

The Verona Area School District worked closely with the architecture and design firm, Eppstein Uhen Architects (EUA), to determine their overall vision for the project. They wanted to embrace 21st century learning, which meant there would be less lecture and more active learning in classrooms. In this type of environment, the teacher doesn't always end up at the head of the classroom, so they needed to be able to move their work stations around the room and not be tethered to the front.

"We wanted the furniture to be flexible. We wanted it to be light enough to move around with a variety of heights, both sitting heights and some standing heights. We also wanted to have comfortable seating in each classroom."

—Pam Hammen, Principal, Verona High School

““They were looking for different modalities.”
Said Abie Khatchadourian, Senior Project
Manager, EUA. “More flexibility than we’ve
traditionally seen.”

They wanted this flexibility to extend beyond
just the classrooms to areas like in the open
atrium space and even the science labs.

Henricksen developed several pilot classrooms
for the teachers and students to experiment
with while they were still occupying the old
high school. The classrooms had a variety of
furniture types and configurations, so users
could see what they liked.

“We gathered a lot of input,” said Hammen.
“People really appreciated it, and it was
necessary so that we selected furniture that
met our needs.”



Classroom



Classroom

Included in this testing were an assortment
of whiteboards, but the students and faculty
found most of them to be too large and heavy
for their purposes. Henricksen helped to
provide something custom that was smaller
and more portable in order to meet the
teachers’ needs. For easy storage when not in
use, the whiteboards were designed to hang
on the back of nesting tables.

Hooks were also installed on the classroom
tables that were strong enough to hang
backpacks, in order to mitigate the need for
lockers.



Bridge

For the furniture throughout the building, from the classrooms to the atrium, Henricksen worked closely with EUA to present a variety of fabrics and finishes for the client to choose from. The school colors are orange, black, and white, but the faculty wanted more variety and balance than just those colors. Enough options were provided for several color schemes to be presented to the district, and they were able to select different color schemes for different areas of the school, which helped with wayfinding throughout the space.

"I appreciated their expertise, how they gave me things to choose from and lots of authority to make final decisions," said Hammen.



Class Corridor

"There was nothing left to chance. Henricksen provided a 400-page document with everything spelled out. When you've got a building of that size and the vast majority is getting furniture, you have to get that furniture in and position it and ensure that everything is punch listed. I thought they did a really good job."

—Abie Khatchadourian, Senior Project Manager, EUA



Small Group Instruction

After the furniture was installed, the team at Henricksen created online training videos for the teachers to watch and learn how to use all the new products in a time when in-person training wasn't an option due to COVID-19.

Today, throughout the whole facility, the students and staff have options. Where there was little variety in their old building, now there is integrated soft seating and standing height options to choose from in almost every space. Mobility and reconfigurability is also a common theme throughout. In the cafeteria there are standing height common tables and curved booths available to create alternate work spaces. There are even shelving units in the library with casters, allowing users to move and adapt spaces as needs rapidly change.

"We can design a brand-new building with moveable walls and flexible spaces, but unless the furnishings have the same principles, the building won't function as intended," said Megan Walker, Senior Interior Designer, EUA. "Spaces are only successful if they work hand in hand with the furniture."

"We have open collaborative areas now within the classrooms and even in the library there is a nice variety of work spaces," said Hammen.

Through constant collaboration with a variety of stakeholders, Henricksen helped Verona High School achieve their goal of creating a flexible, 21st century learning environment.