

Designing Schools for Today's Students

A lot has changed in education and in Monticello in the more than 60 and 70 years since Monticello's elementary schools – Shannon and Carpenter – were built. In fact, Carpenter was constructed five years before the current Monticello Community School District was formed. Over the last half a century, our homes, grocery stores, gas stations, etc... have all evolved. Take for example, self-check kiosks. Or when was the last time someone else pumped your gas?

Similarly, how we teach and learn has also changed. So, it stands to reason that schools today are designed differently than they were when Monticello's elementary schools were built. If you've been in the new Monticello Middle School recently, you know that today's schools are designed to be:



Collaborative

Small group collaboration zones and flexible gathering spaces are hallmarks of next generation schools. Good design makes room for formal and informal learning opportunities. Integrating technology into curriculum and classrooms creates environments where students can discuss, collaborate, and produce. From something as simple as the number and location of outlets in a room, to mobile furniture that supports the use of personal technologies and flexible classrooms with interactive displays, white boards, and idea generation recording options, technology is compelling change.



Flexible

New modes of teaching and engaging students mean that classrooms need to be maximized for flexibility. Creating spaces that accommodate multiple classroom configurations rapidly with minimal effort is a key element of next-generation school design. The goal is to future proof spaces so the facility is adaptable to the needs of future generations.



Secure

School security is a vital issue. Ensuring the safety of students, faculty, and staff is an essential priority. Smart school design includes limiting the number of entrances, eliminating dead-end hallways, nooks, and crannies, and a host of other effective strategies. Video surveillance, barriers, mechanical entry-control devices, and alarms can be thoughtfully integrated to ensure safety without compromising comfort.



Experiential & Project-Based

Media centers are no longer traditional single-purpose spaces. Instead, they serve as agile, user-curated, active, and informal classrooms, studios, labs and maker spaces, which fully engage and connect students with each other and with teachers. Maker spaces, hacker spaces, and digital zones offer ways for students to deepen critical digital literacy skills and build skills for future careers.