

2023 A4LE LE SOLUTIONS AWARD

Ottumwa Career Campus



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Marketplace for Learning

A market. A place where parties gather to facilitate the exchange of goods and services. A connector of people, products, and ideas. In Ottumwa, Iowa, one market has transformed into a career campus designed to connect students to industry-based education and training tailored specifically to the region’s workforce development.

Market on Main, an empty historic building at a prominent downtown corner, paved the way for the new Ottumwa Career Campus. The approximately 11,000 SF adaptive reuse facility supports various career programs and is viewed as a long-term investment in the future of education for the community. Taking inspiration from the building’s former function as a market, the new career campus provides space for students to innovate and explore their own career pathways, and with peers and business partners in a supportive environment.

Ottumwa Community School District leaders came together with business trailblazers to reimagine the former market as a new, innovative learning environment to support high-demand career fields. This intentional collaboration between local businesses and organizations ensure that the programs are relevant and that the real-life experiences prepare students for rewarding careers.

Organized around a centralized collaboration space, flexible learning studios connect visually and physically via overhead glass doors. A technology lab supports career pathways and shares the same connection to open collaboration spaces, allowing students to shift to environments that support their task at hand. Small group rooms offer students and staff right-sized spaces for focused work and team collaboration.

The Culinary Arts Lab elevates educational opportunities for the career pathway, offering industry-like spaces for students. To support the program, a student-run pastry and coffee bar provide a real-world retail setting. These spaces are strategically located along the Main Street side and serve as a gathering space for students and the community.

A large collaborative space transitions from learning environment by day to district board room by night. It also accommodates school programming, district events such as registration, summer camps, commercial meetings, community events, adult education classes, and more.

The Ottumwa Career Campus project embodies revitalization – capitalizing on the rebuilding of an historic downtown; a district’s desire to increase learning opportunities for all students; and partnerships that foster economic and workforce growth.

Scope of Work & Budget	
Owner	Ottumwa Community School District
Project Name	Ottumwa Career Campus
Facility Type	Career and Technical Center
Location	Ottumwa, IA
Grade Levels	9-12 & Adult Education
Project Size	11,100 SF
Student Capacity	150
Construction Cost	\$1,360,000
Construction Delivery Method	Design – Bid – Build

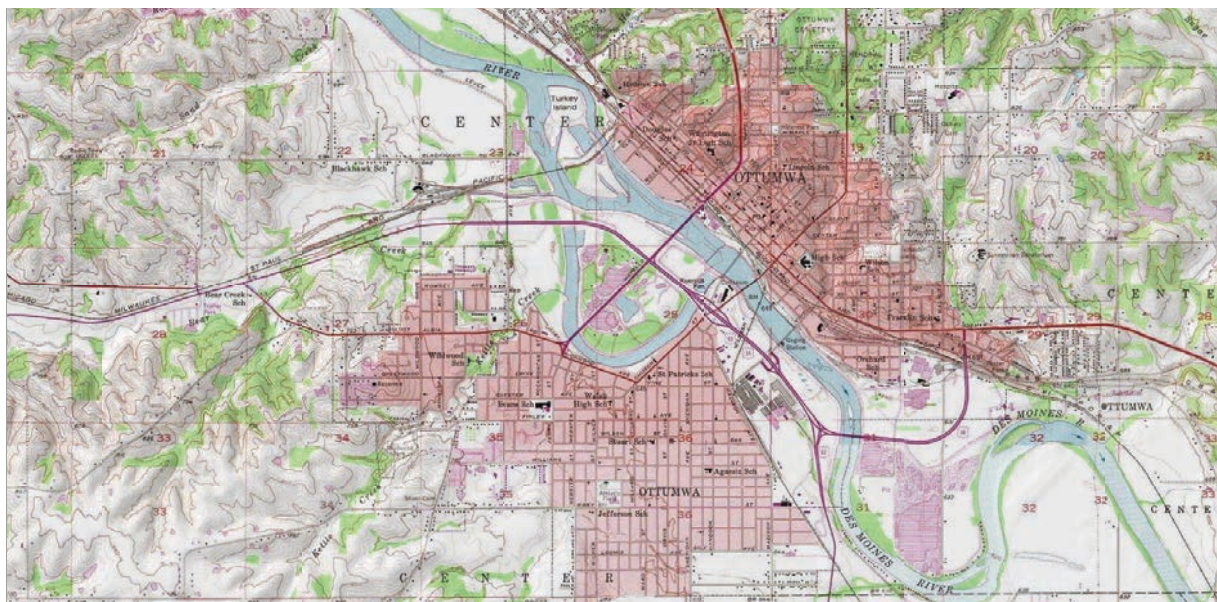


Understanding the Community

History of Ottumwa

Ottumwa is a city of rich history and unusual quality. It serves as a major economic, commercial, and cultural hub for Southeastern Iowa and is literally split into northern and southern halves by the Des Moines River.

Large deposits of coal and clay in the region played an important role in the industrial development of the city. The population of Ottumwa boomed from 1860 to 1870 and continued to grow to a peak population of 33,871 in 1960 before declining to 25,000 in 2000, where it has steadied. The closure of several manufacturing plants in the 1960s left a shortage of jobs, forcing many to leave the city. The region also suffered agricultural crises and flooding, further contributing to out-migration.



Ottumwa Timeline

1843 Appanoose Rapids Company staked claim to 467 acres of land

1859 Arrival of Burlington and Missouri River Railroad brought new transportation availability for commercial and industrial expansion

1860 to 1870 population spike from 1,632 to 5,000+

1877 to 1973 John Morrell & Company and meat packing companies further develop the city

1960 population peaks at 33,871

2012 Market on Main opens

2015 Legacy Foundation approves streetscape study for Main Street Ottumwa

2019 Market on Main closes

2022 Main Street Ottumwa streetscape project is completed

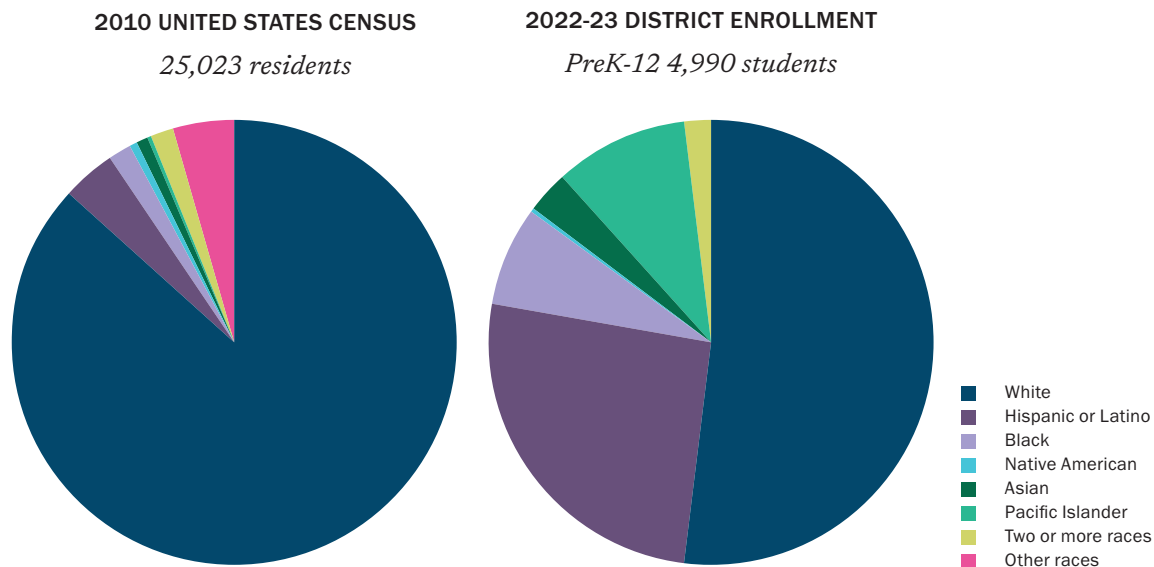
Understanding the Community

Recent sizable developments have spurred newfound commercial interest in the area. Locally owned businesses, as well as national corporations, are expanding and/or opening new facilities in Ottumwa. The city's Main Street transformation played a major role in this resurgence. Main Street Ottumwa is one of just 55 accredited Main Street Programs in Iowa, an initiative that instills community pride in downtowns by restoring buildings, attracting new businesses, and inspiring people to stay or return to the community.

Main Street Ottumwa originated as a water/sewer separation project and soon ballooned into a \$6 million streetscape plan with new pavement, sidewalks, lighting, greenspace and parking. Permeable pavers, native flowers and trees, artwork, sculpture and a sound system enhance the downtown corridor and provide a modern, inviting experience for residents and visitors alike. The redevelopment also maintains the city's traditional architectural style from the 1900s with restored facades on several downtown buildings, including the former Market on Main.

Today, Ottumwa supports a nearly \$4 billion economy based on manufacturing, healthcare, higher education, retail and commercial services. The city is home to global companies such as JBS USA, John Deere, Cargill, Keurig, Dr. Pepper, and Plastipak.

Populations



Home to Global Companies



Knowing Our Stakeholders

Visionaries

Stakeholder groups for this project were all-inclusive and represented the greater Ottumwa community. They included current and future learners, community members, business partners, corporate leaders, educators, and district administrators.

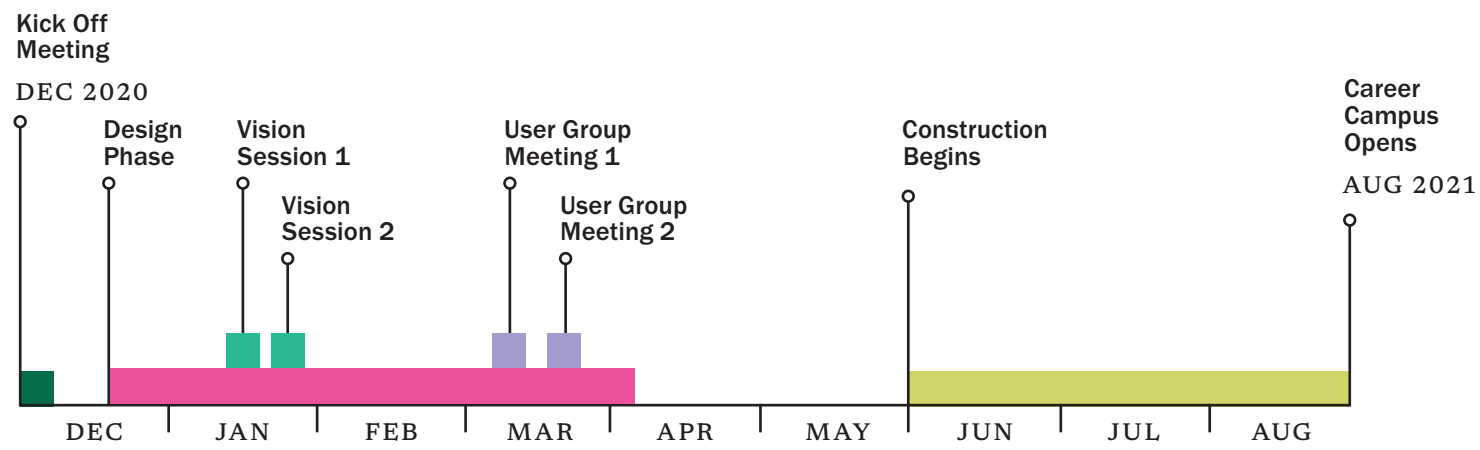
Two primary groups emerged as visionaries for the project:

- 1. students and staff of Ottumwa Community School District; and
- 2. business partners who would play a pivotal role in the training and placement of graduates.

Select members from each group formed an Executive Advisory Board to ensure stakeholder voices were heard and their vision was realized in the final design. Members included high school staff, district administrators, students, the Main Street Executive Director, small business leaders, and an agricultural equipment executive.

The process included visioning sessions with each stakeholder group, as well as user group meetings with leaders and educators in each of the primary curriculum areas. Designers conducted these meetings inside the space, sparking creative a-ha moments where stakeholders could physically “see” the impact they would have on the existing space.

The district’s technology team also played a crucial role in the success of this project. Technology team members held separate meetings with designers to ensure the technology package would enhance the experience within the facility.



Fast-tracked Schedule

This four-month design schedule reinforces the fast-tracked process to welcome students by August 2021.

Repurposing Market on Main

Obstacles

With only eight months to deliver visioning, design, and construction, every minute counted. Repurposing a building with existing systems and infrastructure added another layer of complexity to the fast-paced schedule. The design team had to maneuver the limited footprint and existing conditions - during a global pandemic - to meet the community's dream of transforming this vacant space into a collaborative, future-facing learning environment. Supply chain struggles limited selection of materials to local or regional-based materials to ensure no delays in the schedule.

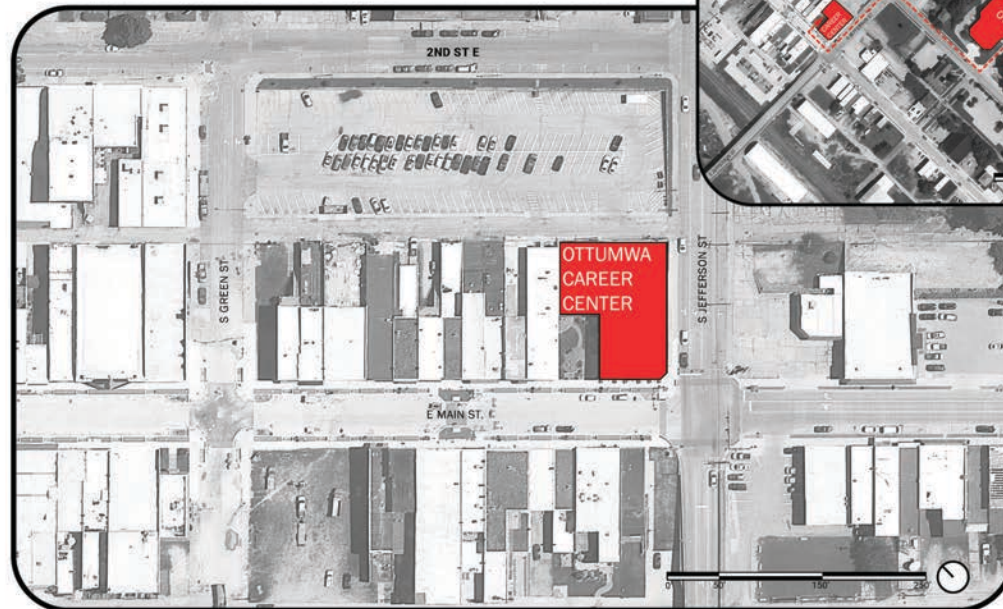
Assets

Although a potential obstacle, the existing building was seen as a true community asset. Its location on Main Street is the ideal spot to celebrate and display learning that occurs within and for the community. Steps away from Ottumwa High School, the career campus offers students the opportunity for autonomy. Students can travel from the high school to the career campus throughout the day, giving them a break from the daily routine of a traditional school experience.



Existing Space - Future Centralized Collaboration Space

OTTUMWA CAREER CENTER OTTUMWA, IA



You do not have to stick to the same thing every day, you get different options to do. You just have fun."

- student in the Construction program

Community Value

Growing Our Own

Ottumwa Career Campus's value extends beyond the building. The facility is small, purely measuring square footage, but its significance is found in the impact to the greater community. The campus serves as the anchor to downtown and is a staple of Main Street. The output of learning that occurs inside the building is positioning the city to thrive. It is the lifeblood to what the community calls "growing our own" for a future talent pipeline that supports local economic development.

In addition to a learning center, it is a multi-use space for community members and businesses. Residents have access to host private gatherings; businesses can conduct commercial meetings; and the campus is available for continuing education events.

“*Look at the businesses Ottumwa has. Cargill. Pioneer. We have John Deere. We have JBS. It makes total sense to have a quality ag program in town, and I feel very strongly that we're going to have just that.*”

- Mark Hanson
Principal
Ottumwa High School



Community Value

Engagement for Equitable Experiences

Today, Ottumwa Community School District serves families that speak more than 40 languages and one-fifth of the population speaks a language other than English. In an ethnically and culturally diverse world, students must be equipped with a global perspective if they are to interact effectively with all people, regardless of background.

All high school students are invited to participate in the career campus and participation reflects the greater population of the school district and community. The programs offered align with the local economic activity in Ottumwa and the surrounding areas.



One primary goal for the career campus is to provide a highly collaborative space for all students to learn in a very warm, inviting, collaborative and innovative space; especially for populations of students, families, and community partners who come from historically underserved populations. More students can now learn invaluable career and post-secondary readiness/employability skills and feel welcome and valued because of the career campus.

As the number of students served at the campus grows, so does the diversity of the students who take courses in this space.



Excerpt from OCSD
Equity Plan 2023

Defining Equity & Cultural Competence

In the Ottumwa Community School District, all learners will have access to rigorous and challenging learning opportunities, which lead to measured growth and high achievement without predictable links to race, culture, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. Learners will acquire an awareness of their own cultural identity and value racial, social, cultural, and ethnic diversities so as to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds.

The Vision for Equity at Ottumwa Schools

Ottumwa Community Schools serves a community rich in diversity – in every measure of the term – and strives each and every day to engage, educate, and empower our students and staff so that they think, learn, achieve, and care.

“A lot of people don’t get a lot of opportunities to be able to bake or cook because of where they come from, you know, like in their house. So, this gives us a way to express ourselves in a different way that we’re not really used to.”

- student referring to the Culinary Lab

Visioning Sessions

Student / Staff Input

Visioning sessions were structured to capture feedback directly related to future casting of the new career campus. Students and staff were invited to share their needs, wants, and wishes that would become the baseline for the new campus and programs within. Designers ensured the top needs were met within the schedule and budget first, followed by popular wants and wishes that would return this facility to its once-thriving roots.

Students expressed the desire for relaxed spaces and real-world experiences in a professional work environment during their future casting activity. They outlined the top priorities through a dot polling exercise.



Student & Staff Feedback

Top 7 Needs

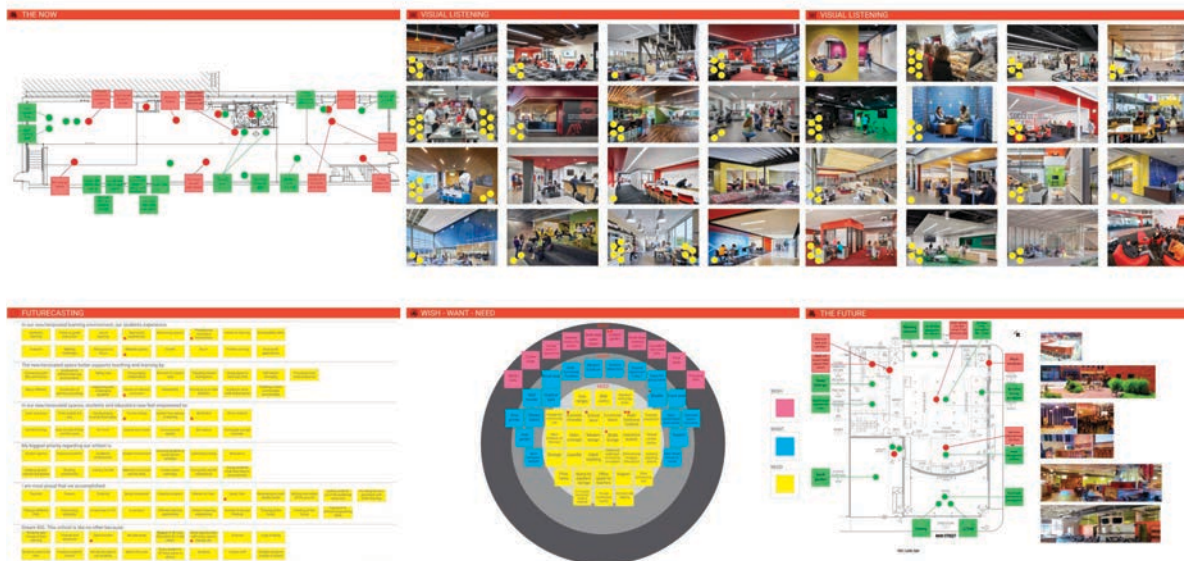
- Business incubator
- School store
- Study lounge
- Multi-functional furniture
- Open concept
- Motivational imagery
- Flexible environment for various activities and audiences

Top 3 Wants

- Comfortable work spaces
- Vibrant colors and wall murals
- Retail area

Top 3 Wishes

- Outdoor garden
- Transparency and open concept
- Coffee shop



EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Visioning Sessions

Executive Advisory and Business Partner Input

Visioning sessions for the business partners and the Executive Advisory Committee were structured in the same manner to gather top needs, wants, and wishes.

Committee members expressed the desire for professional environments that empower learners to broaden their mindset and quality experiences through business partnership programs. They outlined the top priorities through a dot polling exercise.



Executive Advisory & Business Partner Feedback

Top 7 Needs

- Community engagement
- Flexible environment
- Dedicated maker space
- Improved acoustics
- Collaboration with business partners
- Designed for education & community use
- Real-world experiences

Top 3 Wants

- Local internships
- Cutting-edge technology
- Adaptable

Top 3 Wishes

- Downtown as a learning lab
- Active and vibrant space
- Exposure to younger grades (K-8)



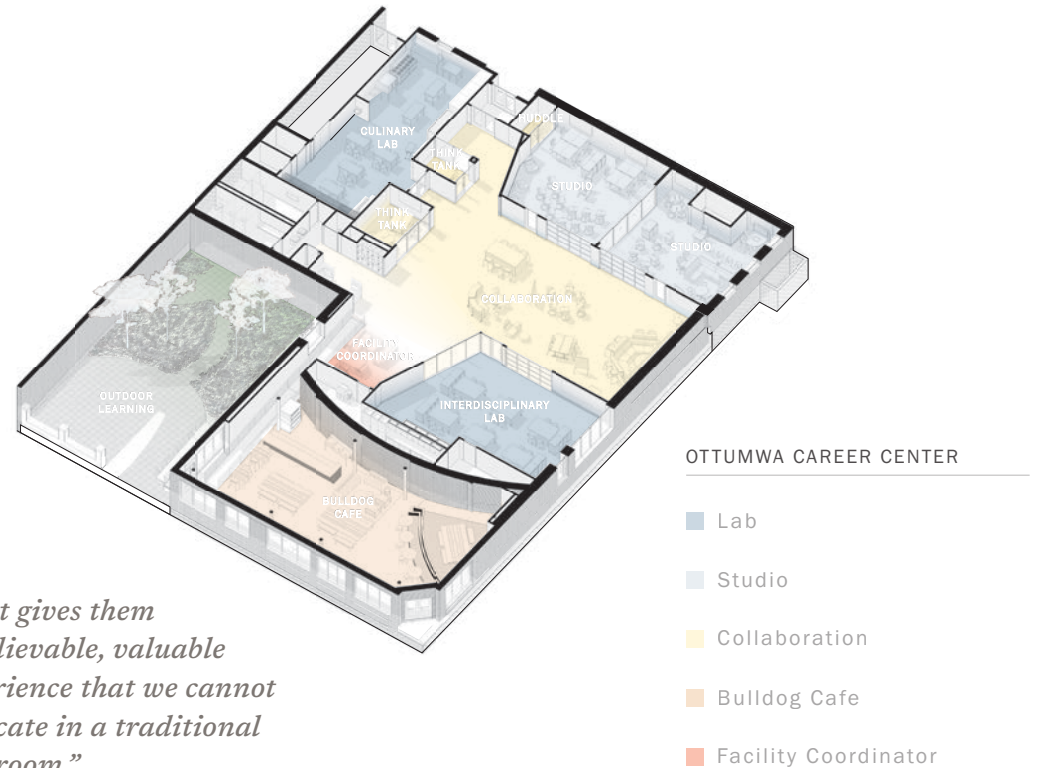
EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Supporting the Curriculum

Public engagement and guidance throughout the visioning process drove the conversation to new modalities in the pedagogical practices that the career campus could and would offer. Separating this new innovative learning environment from the existing high school was critical to district leaders. Their aim was to create activities and programs that would replicate business settings to better serve the curiosity of career and industry driven students.

Within the space, a conscious decision was made to situate learning studios around a centralized collaboration zone to support opportunities for visual and physical connections. A shift in teaching and learning methods is possible through use of overhead glass sectional doors in this zone. A Technology Lab, small group rooms, and a Culinary Arts Lab are all organized to effectively take advantage of the flexible collaboration area.

Updated programs provide a real-world environment for the students to get hands-on experiences not offered at the high school. The Culinary Arts Lab also operates Bulldog Café, a pastry and coffee bar at the community space at the south end of the facility fronting Main Street. This location creates opportunity for community connections and promotes collaboration between students and their environment.



It just gives them unbelievable, valuable experience that we cannot replicate in a traditional classroom."

- Former executive director of teaching and learning



Accommodating Various Teaching and Learning Styles

Programs at the campus allow students to explore career interests, learn real world skills, earn valuable certifications, and receive college credits through the local community college. Students “earn while they learn” in registered apprenticeships and internships.

The space is designed to flex and flow, supporting inter-disciplinary and team-teaching opportunities and a variety of educational activities. Inherent flexibility encourages students and educators to open instructional areas to each other and to collaborative spaces throughout. Glass garage doors give visitors a glimpse into student work happening inside labs, while a pocket park allows students to continue their learning outdoors.

Adaptable and Flexible

In addition to an abundance of transparency and flexibility built into the campus, the space transitions from day to night activities. During the day, students learn and apply hands-on lessons. At night, the collaborative area houses school board meetings and other community-based events. Upgraded technology supports the various configurations and uses including virtual meetings and positions the center to accommodate the ever-changing needs of the community and school district. The technology in tandem with the flexible design ensure the campus will evolve as programs and learning evolves in Ottumwa.



Career Strands

Business

Construction Trades

Family Consumer Sciences

Culinary & Hospitality

Automotive Technologies

Engineering & CAAD Design

Metals and Advanced Manufacturing

Health Sciences

Agriculture Sciences

Computer Sciences



EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Accommodating Various Teaching & Learning Styles

Delivering a career campus within a \$1.3 million budget and eight-month schedule requires creative thinking and design awareness. The design features transparency to get others excited about the commerce occurring inside. Operable doors expand and contract space depending on the need of the moment and flexible furniture results in choice, all culminating to bring a modern-day spin on the market concept.

The advanced technology system provides the district with an upgraded sound system and audio/visual equipment to support education and board room functions alike. Enhanced technology options within the engineering pathway includes drone operation and repair and 3D printing. Plus, Ottumwa CSD's 1:1 technology standard offers each student the ability to connect digitally and to collaborate either in-person or remotely.

While these new features are inspiring, what's more impressive is the incorporation of existing equipment, casework, and systems from the former Market on Main. The design maintains the shape of the market's kitchen by reusing the hood and a built-in counter that now serves as the public-facing coffee shop counter. Mechanical systems also remain intact.

Significant improvements to mitigate unwanted existing HVAC noise from the space were implemented to provide an environment conducive to teaching and learning.



RESULTS

Ottumwa CSD

Mission

Inspire every student to think, learn, achieve and care.

Vision

Engage, educate, and empower every student, every day.

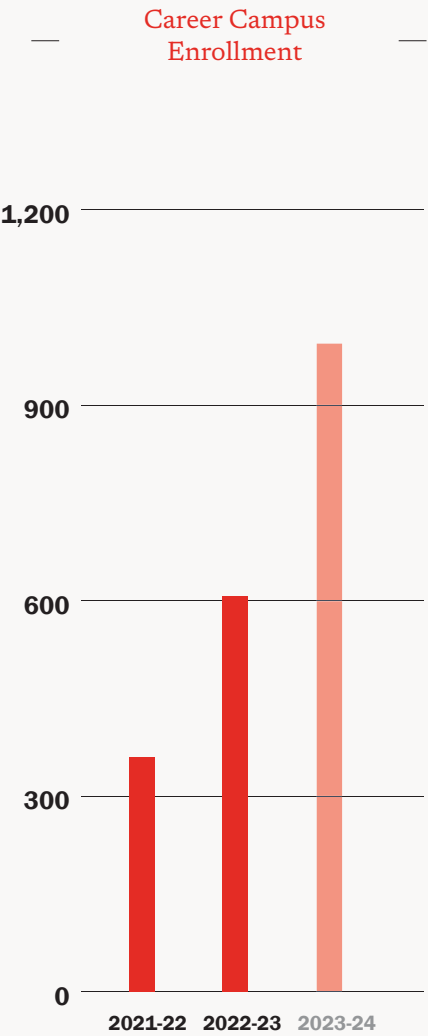
Core Beliefs

- Every student matters
- Building relationships is the foundation of success
- We will meet the needs of all students
- Data will drive our decision-making
- Collaboration and teamwork are necessary for success
- All students can learn at high levels

The Career Campus is helping the district achieve its mission by providing a warm, welcoming, state of the art learning environment. Here, collaboration, teamwork and high levels of learning are happening while students and community members partner to tackle real problems and challenges through a variety of career fields.

The facility is a conduit between community businesses, Ottumwa Main Street Organization, industry partners, and the school system. Students are downtown, in the heart of Ottumwa. This allows community strategic planning partnerships to be fostered while students learn employability and post-secondary skills, make real-world connections, and build lasting relationships.

A variety of Ottumwa community partners and organizations utilize the facility. Community meetings, forums, celebrations, district board meetings are some of the events hosted within the space. Patrons utilize the flexible seating options and collaborative design to tackle real issues facing the community and the region, together.



Total Students Served	
2021-22	360
2022-23	604
Projected 2023-24	998

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Physical Attributes

The existing building is the anchor of the downtown corridor, previously operating as the Market on Main. Its brick façade and prominent corner location position it as the recognized gathering spot within the city's core. The transformation celebrates its significance in the community and respects its storied past. Exposed brick and original features are carefully restored to function as a learning hub.

The interior design open concept can be adapted at a moment's notice. Operable walls, movable furniture, and technology access create a level of flexibility desired by students and educators. With windows only located along the storefront, transparent elements such as glass doors and open areas bring light deep into the interior environment.

Limited to the existing footprint, the design allows for critical building functions, infrastructure, and systems to remain intact. For instance, students in the Culinary Arts program benefit from a commercial kitchen and equipment that were integral in the Market on Main facility. The commercial hood, cooking equipment, and casework are found in the lab and coffee shop today.



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Responding to the Community

Maintaining the integrity of the historical building and modernizing it for the district's needs were clear guiding principles for the design. Selected materials respect the historic space and its context within the downtown community. Integrating modern technology and maintaining clean lines establish the space in the present day.

A color palette celebrating school pride imbues the space with the spirit of innovation and creativity the school district desired to convey. Polished concrete, exposed ductwork, and stainless-steel finishes reflect the industrial nature of the technical skills students develop while in the space.

Acoustical Treatment

The existing mechanical system created a unique challenge in the open, collaborative space. When operational, the system was extremely loud and disruptive.

Every stakeholder group called attention to this noisy problem during visioning sessions. Designing the right solution became a priority for the team; and it delivered. The design creatively incorporates baffles, allowing the space to remain the open concept as intended. The baffles are a focal point that celebrate the district's brand colors and bring a sense of pride to the space.



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Grid System

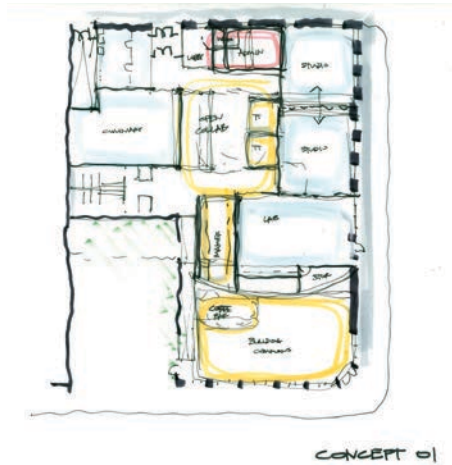
The building layout creates a grid parti to allow flexible use of the spaces to accommodate the ever-changing industries offered on campus. Referencing the traditional marketplace of small stalls around a central gathering point, learning studios are placed around a centralized collaboration zone to emphasize connections. Overhead glass doors also open to expand the space and create a commerce-like vibe of the overall building.

Floor Plan



*Collaboration by day ...
board room by night*

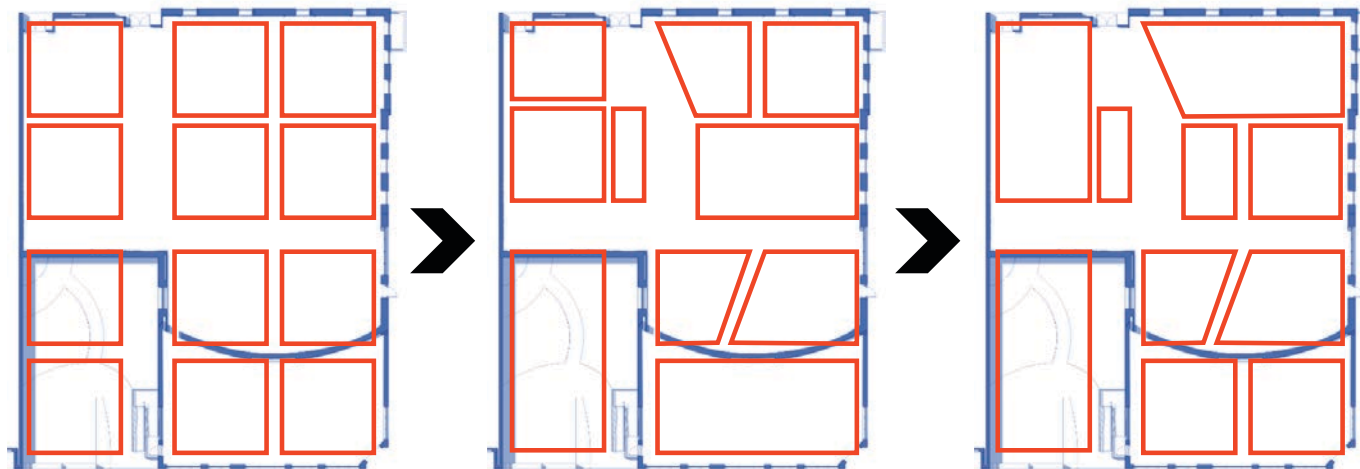
Early Concepts



In conjunction with early collaborative visioning sessions, the design team prepared several concepts to help the district meet the goals set forth. Although various existing building constraints posed challenges, several viable solutions were created through the design process. Input from district stakeholders identified the top priorities, including flexibility, transparency, security, and access.

Leveraging these early sketches, the team coalesced stakeholder feedback into a final solution that achieves the district's and community's goal for the career campus. It uses inspiration and precedent of a market's flexibility and provides a solution that meets the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Market Overlay



A Focus on Wellbeing

Stomp Out Stigma

With a heightened emphasis on mental wellbeing, the career campus recently hosted a mental wellness expo by the local Stomp Out Stigma club at Ottumwa High School. This community-wide event and expo showcased different ways for community members to access help if needed. The event featured booths where attendees could explore resources to care for their physical and mental health and an emotional student art show that helped students express themselves.

Sustainable Approach

Retrofitting the existing building allows the district to offer a new career campus without creating additional carbon footprint. The design reuses existing equipment, casework, and mechanical systems to save on costs and waste.

Throughout the project, the team diverted 2,380 CY of construction waste from the local landfill. The team also reduced energy usage by installing LED lighting and increased thermal performance of exterior walls.

The career campus is walkable from Ottumwa High School, reducing the reliance on vehicular transportation to and from the campus. Durable, low maintenance materials and fixtures, such as polished concrete floors, also contribute to the goal of minimizing the building's impact on the environment.

