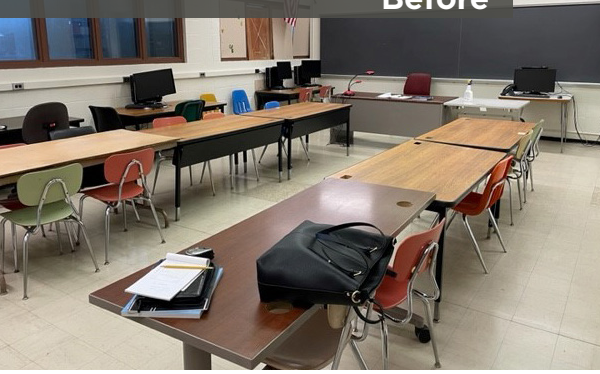


Before



ESSER REFERENCE



Gary Community Schools

Gary, IN



After



Gary Community School Corporation is a public school district in Gary, Indiana, about 25 miles southeast of Chicago. The district has faced many challenges, including worn-out facilities, financial struggles, and declining enrollment. With new leadership, and an influx of COVID relief funds, the district has made incredible strides. They've achieved a balanced budget, improved academic services, and now have stable enrollment. One of their major efforts was to replace the furniture in all of their aging buildings. The district chose to partner with VS America to bring new life to their learning spaces.

“The functionality is 10x better than the outdated furniture we had before. Small group arrangements have made learning so much more accessible. Mobility has been key.”

- Mr. Derek Bodley, Assistant Principal, Gary Middle School

Q&A with Toni Mitchell, ESSER Project Manager for Gary Community Schools

How were you able to use ESSER funds towards furniture?

We used ESSER funds to purchase furniture to improve our facilities and address learning loss by increasing student engagement.

How did VS help you throughout the process?

VS helped by providing detailed documentation in their proposal about how furniture can positively affect learning.

Why did you choose VS America for your furniture?

VS brought in samples and presented the products. We conducted a survey and VS stood out to the reviewers for being able to support different types of instruction. We are very happy with our decision to purchase VS furniture. It has very positively impacted learning. The new furniture allows students to easily form different groups and collaborate effectively. VS was able to meet our timing needs perfectly to limit disruption in the schools.

Any tips you would offer to other schools who want to use ESSER funds towards furniture?

Know what you're purchasing - do your due diligence. Think about how it can impact student learning.



www.vsamerica.com

VS America's agile furniture ties into ESSER funds under these categories:

ADDRESSING STUDENT LEARNING LOSS

Student-centered learning environments shift the focus of instruction from the teacher to the student, developing autonomous and independent students. These spaces give teachers more opportunities to address learning loss, while supporting increased participatory relationships and fostering social belonging.



SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH

Students are constantly switching between being tense and relaxed throughout the day. To thrive in these opposing states, they need appropriate spaces in equal measure. In addition to areas that foster movement, classrooms need nooks and corners students can seek out when they need quiet time.

“Growing bodies have a natural need to move. Increased opportunities to move while seated improve blood flow and oxygen to the brain, thereby increasing attention and concentration levels.”

- Dr. Dieter Breithecker, Health and Kinetics Scientist

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS

Agile spaces provide an equity of opportunity, so every single student has an opportunity to sit, stand, or learn in any way they need to. They also foster security in safely giving your opinion, solving problems, and working through conflict, while offering both personal and private spaces to promote reflective behaviors.

“Our own comfort and movement as adults is critically important. Why wouldn't that be the same for children? We have invested in agile furniture throughout our entire district. We've already seen the benefit of kids being able to sit in chairs that they're comfortable in and given permission to 'wiggle.'”

- RJ Webber, EdD, Superintendent

IMPROVING FACILITIES TO REDUCE VIRUS TRANSMISSION

Replacing static classroom furniture with agile furniture that rolls and stacks allows the space to be easily and constantly reconfigured, and more easily and thoroughly cleaned. Agile furniture solutions ensure school leaders have the necessary resources to address the needs of their individual schools.



Give students every opportunity

COVID-19 relief (ESSER) funds, invested in the right classroom furniture, can transform learning spaces – providing teachers and students with a powerful tool for generations to come.