

## AMES HIGH SCHOOL

Ames, Iowa



The new Ames High School opened its doors in August 2022, welcoming 1,600 students to a modern, thoughtfully designed facility that reflects the district's ambition to deliver a collegiate-level experience for its students. Approved by voters in 2018, the \$137 million project represented a bold investment in the future of education in Ames, Iowa. Rippe Associates partnered with the OPN Architects design team to bring this vision to life through an elevated, flexible foodservice environment that supports both daily dining and district-wide operational needs.

At the heart of the dining area is a collegiate-style scatter concept, where serving stations line the perimeter and self-serve salad and fruit bars are centrally located, allowing for a seamless and efficient flow of students. An Ala Carte window opens directly into the dining area and is backed by a dedicated hot production kitchen—robust enough to support both the Ala Carte service and two additional serving lines—streamlining operations and reducing the overall kitchen footprint. This efficient layout not only saves space but also optimizes labor and production resources.

### Details

Opening Date: August 2022

Equipment Cost: \$1,231,536

Project Size: 9,500 SF

### Scope

Collegiate-style dining program featuring an efficient, flexible layout that supports both daily student meals and district-wide foodservice operations. Key innovations include a scatter-style serving area, centralized cold production, strategic equipment reuse, and energy-efficient technologies.

Strategic adjustments in the central production model were also key to the project’s success. The previous high school served as a hot production hub for satellite schools throughout the district. With the new facility, that model shifted to a cold production and centralized storage approach. This allowed for a reduction in hot production space and reallocation to expanded cold prep and storage areas near the dock—where deliveries come in and are quickly turned around for distribution to satellite schools. The dry storage area is likewise dock-adjacent, facilitating efficient turnaround of goods for daily requisition.

Despite challenges, including a district leadership transition early in the planning process, the Rippe team helped ensure continuity of vision and performance. Existing equipment from the former high school was strategically integrated into the new layout, achieving significant cost savings without sacrificing operational effectiveness. Energy efficiency was also prioritized through features like low-volume exhaust hoods, ventless cooking technology, an energy recovery dish machine, Energy Star refrigeration, and low-flow water fixtures. Today, the facility stands as a state-of-the-art model of high school foodservice, drawing attention from K-12 foodservice directors across Iowa.

