

CEDAR FALLS COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

Cedar Falls, Iowa



The new Cedar Falls Community High School, a 305,000-square-foot facility, marks a major milestone for the district, culminating years of planning, collaboration, and thoughtful design. Rippe Associates' involvement began with a district-wide foodservice masterplan, which took a holistic view of operations across all schools. The shift from a centralized production model to independent school-based preparation prompted the renovation of four elementary schools in advance of the new high school's construction. This transformation led to a 20% increase in student meal participation and significantly improved food quality and variety across the district.

The foodservice program at Cedar Falls High School was designed to meet both operational and experiential goals. A scattered servery layout with multiple production-supported stations was key to ensuring fast, efficient service during peak lunch times, while creating a collegiate-style environment for students. A student-run coffee shop, culinary arts kitchen for the FACS program, and multiple concessions locations—including those supporting the gymnasium, football stadium, and aquatics center—extend foodservice well beyond the traditional cafeteria model.

Details

Opening Date: August 2024

Equipment Cost: \$1,800,000

Football Concessions: \$250,000

Servery & Kitchen: 9,600 SF

FACS Lab: 1,600 SF

Gym Concessions: 560 SF

Tiger Den Coffee: 350 SF

Football & Aquatic Concessions:
2,200 SF

Scope

Foodservice planning and design including a multi-station cafeteria, central cold prep and baking kitchen, district-wide warehousing, and multiple concessions and retail spaces.

The main kitchen serves as the hub for cold prep and baking for the entire district, and also houses central dry and frozen storage to support the renovated elementary schools.

Efficiency was a priority in every design decision. Heated and refrigerated pass-thru units connect the kitchen to the serving area, allowing staff to focus on service without disruption. Storage areas are organized for efficient backloading and streamlined distribution to satellite schools. Cold prep areas were given more square footage than hot prep, based on the menu strategy and production volume. In the serving areas, key equipment like double-stacked conveyor ovens and speed impingement ovens allow for quick, high-quality production of student favorites such as pizza and toasted subs.

Budget-conscious decisions were made throughout the project, including planning for future equipment purchases—such as a second rotating rack oven that was added within the first year of operation. Sustainability was also a core value, with features such as low-volume exhaust hoods, an energy recovery dish machine, Energy Star equipment, and low-flow fixtures. Having been deeply involved in the district's long-term planning, Rippe Associates was uniquely positioned to deliver a foodservice solution that enhances student experience, supports evolving program needs, and increases operational efficiency from elementary through high school.





Awards:

[Green Good Design Awards 2025](#)

[IIDA Great Plains "IDEA" Awards 2025](#)