



Borrego Springs Unified School District

Borrego Springs, CA



› CASE STUDY

A Modern Learning Environment for a Close-Knit Community

Borrego Springs Unified School District sits in a place unlike almost any other school district in California. Tucked within Anza-Borrego Desert State Park in southern San Diego County, the small, family-oriented community is known for its strong sense of pride and connection.



“Borrego Springs is a very unique community,” shared Dr. Mark Stevens, superintendent, and Jessica Gillespie, chief business officer. “You don’t feel the sense of warmth, pride, and family anywhere else.”

For decades, however, the district’s facilities had remained largely unchanged. The high school had not undergone any major renovations since the 1950s, and the furniture students used daily had not been replaced in more than 30 years.

When the community overwhelmingly approved an \$8.6 million bond to refurbish school district buildings, it marked a turning point – not just for the buildings themselves, but for how students experienced learning.

“We received the highest percentage of yes votes in all of San Diego County,” reflected Dr. Stevens. Francisco Ramirez, CTE digital media teacher, added, “Seeing a change brought a whole different scenario to the students. They saw how much the district cared about them.”

Working with **HMC Architects**, furniture integrator and design partner **Bluespace Interiors**, and procurement resource **Sourcewell**, the district set out to modernize its high school learning environments, creating spaces that support today’s students and prepare them for the future.

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Preparing Students for “Borrego and Beyond”

Borrego Springs Unified School District places a strong emphasis on career-focused learning. Educators wanted modernization to support students as they begin exploring what comes next after graduation.

“Students are focusing on what careers they want to enter,” explained Victoria Baay, principal. “Having these updated spaces really lends itself to those career technical education pathways.”

The design approach embraced what the district calls “Borrego and Beyond”—a philosophy centered on preparing students for life after high school. Learning environments were intentionally designed to support collaboration, hands-on learning, and adaptability across academic and career pathways.

Throughout the campus, classrooms, collaborative spaces, and CTE environments were equipped with flexible furniture solutions that allow students and teachers to easily shift between lecture, discussion, and group work.

Durable **Ruckus® seating, storage, and lecterns** anchor many classroom spaces, while **Intellect Wave® desks** and **chairs** provide ergonomic comfort and support for students throughout the day.

In makerspaces and CTE classrooms, adaptable **Stout™ tables** and **Ruckus® worktables** provide sturdy surfaces for both academic work and project-based learning.

The updated furniture makes movement between activities seamless, while the strategically designed learning environments better reflect how students actually learn.





Spaces Designed for Collaboration and Comfort

One of the most visible transformations occurred in the school's shared spaces.

In the library and media center, students now gather in a bright, organized environment that supports both independent study and collaborative work. Modular **MyPlace™ lounge seating**, comfortable **Calida™ lounge chairs**, and versatile **C-Tables™** create welcoming areas where students can read, study, or work together.



“My favorite part is the library,” shared Camila Molina, student. “I love the colors. It’s more organized. The shelves and the seating make it look really clean.”

Nearby study rooms and small touchdown spaces **Pirouette® flip-top nesting tables** and **Strive® stack chairs** provide quiet areas for focused work. These rooms give students the ability to collaborate in small groups while minimizing distractions.

“The study rooms are very spacious,” added Molina. “They allow us to focus and work together in groups.”

Across campus commons areas and dining spaces, **Athens® café tables** paired with **LimeLite™ café stools** and **wood-leg guest chairs** create flexible seating options where students can connect between classes, work on assignments, or simply relax.

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Supporting Every Student's Needs

The modernization project also prioritized accessibility and inclusivity, ensuring learning environments work for every student.

Special education classrooms were equipped with adaptable furniture that can accommodate different learning styles and mobility needs. The flexibility of KI products allowed teachers to tailor their classrooms to meet the unique requirements of their students.

"I'm a special education teacher, and I certainly need to meet the needs of my students," shared Katie Strate, special education teacher. "KI has provided us with furniture that really works for the teachers and the students."

In interactive learning spaces, mobile **Ruckus® lecterns** and **Strive® task stools** for instructors and mobile

Ruckus® chairs and **Pirouette® tables** for students provide additional flexibility, allowing teachers to easily reconfigure rooms to support various teaching approaches.

This adaptability has helped create an environment where collaboration feels natural and students can move comfortably between individual and group learning.

"The roller chairs are great," noted Travis Asche, student. "They allow me to slide over if my group stretches across multiple tables."

"I'm a special education teacher, and I certainly need to meet the needs of my students. KI has provided us with furniture that really works for the teachers and the students."

A Community Investment That Shows Students They Matter

For Borrego Springs, the renovation represents more than just new furniture or updated classrooms. It reflects a broader investment in students and the future of the community.

Because the district is small—serving 345 students across three schools—the transformation has had a particularly meaningful impact.

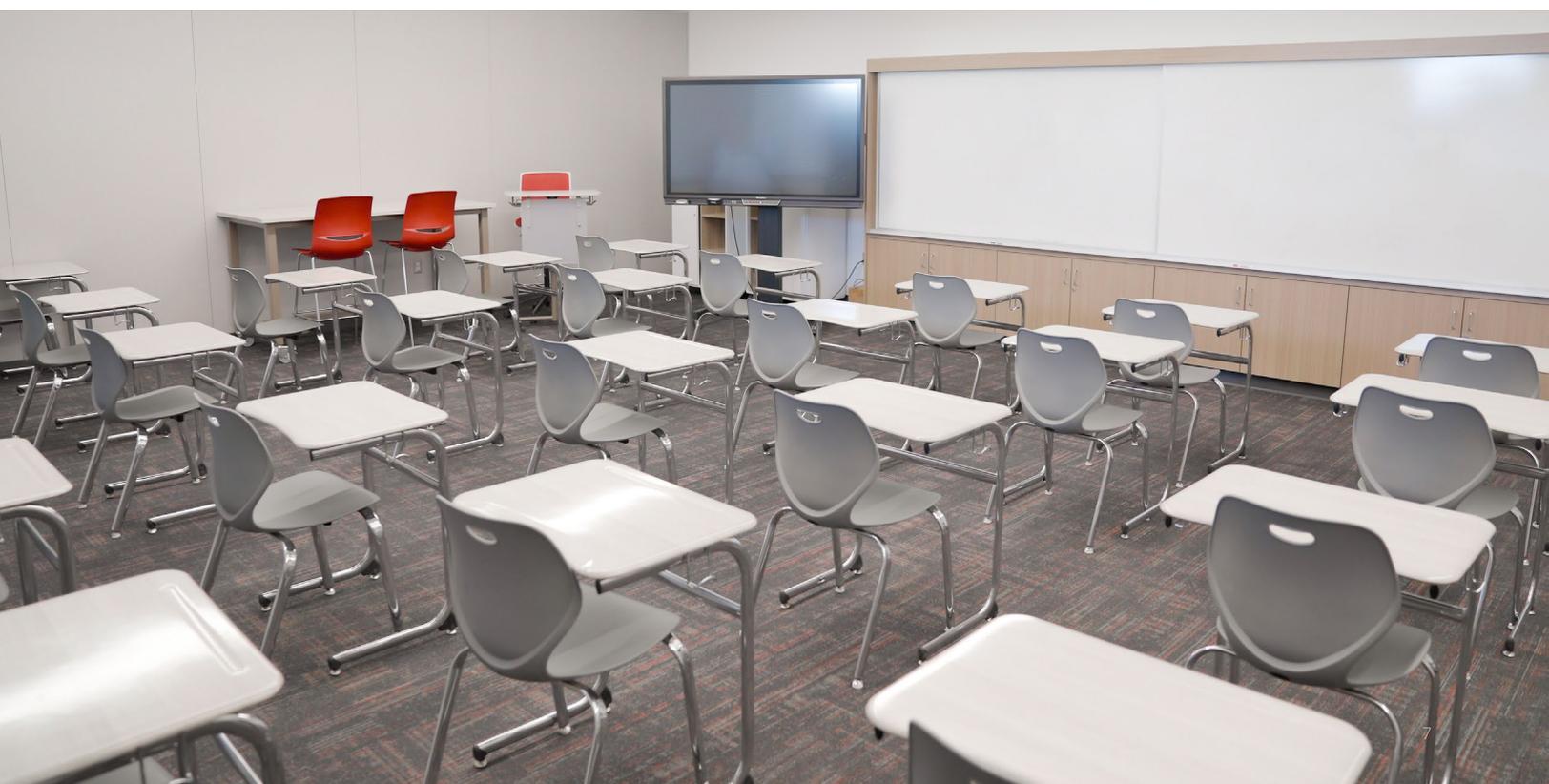
“The community knows the district cares about the students,” Ramirez shared. “I think it gives kids a reason why they should come to school.”

Teachers and administrators have also noticed changes in how students engage with their learning environment.

Strate noted, “Parents feel more confident about where their students are going to school. The students are generally happier. They’re more collaborative. It’s a completely different feel.”

The improved facilities also help reinforce the district’s mission of preparing students for life after graduation.

“It feels more like preparing me for my future,” reflected Asche.





The Power of Partnership

For Borrego Springs Unified School District, selecting the right furniture partner was essential to bringing the vision to life.

“There is no manufacturer better at learning space furniture than KI,” said GK Mandigo, account executive, Bluespace. “They have the products that provide longevity, durability, and beauty in learning spaces.”

The partnership extended far beyond product selection. KI worked closely with the district and project partners to provide product samples, explore color and finish options aligned with school branding, and ensure transparency throughout the process.

“I chose KI as a partner for our modernization project because of the quality, flexibility, and accessibility of their furniture,” Gillespie explained. “They really listened to our story and our students’ needs.”

That collaborative process helped create spaces that are both practical and inspiring.

“KI furniture is designed to last generations,” Mandigo added. “Children born this year will still be using this

A School Environment Students Can Be Proud Of

Today, the renovated high school offers an entirely new learning atmosphere—one that reflects both the spirit of the Borrego Springs community and the aspirations of its students.

For educators and administrators, the impact is measured not just in upgraded spaces but also in how students feel about their school.

“The impact we hope students feel from this modernization is that they feel important,” Gillespie shared. “They feel a sense of pride that they came from somewhere special—and that the district made an investment in them.”



Products Shown



Ruckus®
Chair



Ruckus®
Lectern



Ruckus®
Storage



Ruckus®
Worktable



Intellect Wave®
Chair



Intellect Wave®
Desk



Strive®
Stack Chair



Limelite™
Cafe Stool



Limelite™
Guest Chair



Calida™
Lounge Chair



MyPlace™
Lounge Seating



MyPlace™
Benches & Ottomans



C-Table™
Personal Worksurface



Athens®
Table



Pirouette®
Table



Stout™
Table

Pirouette and Strive designed by Giancarlo Piretti

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Jessica Gillespie, Chief Business Officer



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