

IRN - The Reuse Network

26 Pleasant St. Suite 2a
Concord NH 03301
603-229-1962



Case Study in Reuse Taconic High School, Pittsfield, MA

Overview

Skanska USA was selected as Construction Manager for a new 247,000 square-foot vocational high school in Pittsfield, western Massachusetts. Skanska's responsibilities encompassed demolition of the existing 1969 structure, including disposition of all furnishings.

Skanska auctioned most of the vocational education equipment (automotive, wood- and metal-working, etc.), generating nearly \$100,000 in revenues for the school district. But there remained nearly 3,000 items of classroom, cafeteria, professional, and other furnishings. Skanska's demolition contractor quoted a price of about \$30,000 to haul and landfill these furnishings.

Seeking a better and more cost effective alternative, Skanska's Project Manager John Bona reached out to IRN. IRN is a conduit to charities in the U.S. and around the world who use furnishings sourced from IRN clients to support their mission in disaster relief and economic development.

Composition

Item	Pieces	Item	Pieces
Table, Classroom	196	Desk, Student	899
Table, Other	76	Desk, Other	105
Chair, Stacking	167	Seating, All Other	909
Storage Cabinet or Shelves	56	File Cabinet	185
Bookcase	37	Other	41
		Total	2,671

"Not only did salvaging the furniture reduce our customer's costs, more importantly this approach helped kids in five foreign countries. Somewhere in the world today there are children whose lives are improved by the reuse of these school furnishings. It is not often you get to do the right thing and it costs less."

John Bona, Project Manager, Skanska USA

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26 Pleasant St, Suite 2A Concord, NH 03301 **Tel:** 603.496.0749 **Email:** elennon@ir-network.com **Web:** www.irnreuse.com

Implementation

The furnishings were loaded by a professional crew into 12 overseas shipping containers. Scheduled over four working days, these displaced the need for 30-40 large rolloff containers proposed by the demolition contractor to haul the furnishings to landfill. With multiple contractors onsite, using trailers instead of rolloffs also yielded significant benefits in terms of reduced traffic, congestion and occasions for delay.

Recipients

IRN has a network of more than 250 local, national, and international charities with whom it works to place furnishings for reuse. On the Taconic High School project, the furnishings were accepted by one of IRN's longtime international partners, who identified specific communities to receive the furnishings.

Country	Trailers	Pieces	Country	Trailers	Pieces
El Salvador	4	835	Malawi	2	516
Haiti	2	299	Mauritania	2	476
Jamaica	2	545	Total	12	2,671

Cost

Much as the school district appreciated the social and environmental benefits of reuse, cost was the driving factor in arranging disposition of the surplus furnishings. The demolition contractor quoted a price of some \$30,000 to dispose of the remaining furnishings at Taconic High. The cost of reuse through IRN was about 30% less. These savings are attributable to the fact that IRN's charitable partners absorb much of the cost of shipping the furnishings to their recipients, and by the fact that loading furnishings into trailers for reuse is more efficient and takes less time than filling rolloff containers for landfill.

