

Skanska-IRN Case Study in Reuse
 Taconic High School, Pittsfield, MA



Situation: Demolition of a 750-student vocational high school. Nearly all furnishings were left behind in the structure and needed to be removed in advance of demolition.

Quantity and Composition: Total of 2,671 items, including student and professional desks, classroom and other tables, seating, and storage.

Setting: Suburban streets in Pittsfield (pop. 45,000), about 125 miles west of Boston.

Overview

Skanska USA was selected as Owner’s Project 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 was able to auction most of the vocational education equipment (automotive, wood- and metal-working, etc.), generating nearly \$100,000 in revenues that were returned to the school district. But there remained nearly 3,000 items of classroom, cafeteria, professional, and other furnishings with no buyers. The estimated cost to remove the remaining furnishings and dispose of them at a landfill was approximately \$60,000.

Seeking a better and more cost effective alternative, Skanska’s FF&E Project Manager John Bona reached out to IRN. IRN is a matchmaker with charities in the U.S. and around the world who are able to use surplus furniture 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 six 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, FF&E Project Manager, Skanska USA

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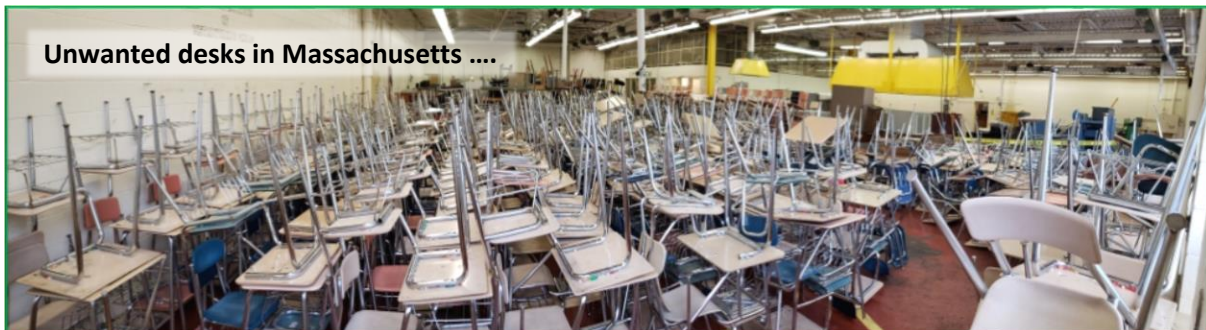
Implementation Skanska established a cooperative relationship with the Berkshire County House of Correction to employ minimum-security inmates to remove furnishings from classrooms and prepare them to be loaded. This stratagem provided additional cost savings to the school district.

Once removed from classrooms, the furnishings were loaded by a professional crew into 12 overseas shipping containers. Scheduled over four working days, these displaced the need for approximately 30 large rolloff containers to haul the furnishings to landfill. With multiple contractors onsite, using trailers instead of rollofs also yielded significant benefits in terms of reduced traffic, congestion and occasions for delay.

Recipients IRN has a network of more than 125 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 IRN’s longtime partner World Vision, who identified specific communities to receive the furnishings.

Country	Trailers	Pieces	Country	Trailers	Pieces
El Salvador	4	835	Malawi	2	516
Haiti	1	102	Mauritania	2	476
Jamaica	2	545	Lebanon	1	
Total				12	2,671

Cost Much as the client appreciated the social and environmental benefits of reuse, cost was the driving factor in disposing of the surplus furnishings. Skanska achieved significant savings by securing labor from the House of Correction. And compared to an estimate of more than \$30,000 to dump the furnishings into a landfill, the cost of reuse through IRN was \$22,000, a savings of about 30%.



Unwanted desks in Massachusetts



.... Reused and giving kids a chance, Lilongwe, Malawi

IRN – The Reuse Network