



New furniture on display in GJHS

Students and staff are getting the chance to try out new furniture that could be featured in new building in Fall 2024

Madeline Behrman and Hailey Shane

Grand Junction High School recently added a variety of new furniture into the library and a couple of classes as potential models for the new school building.

There are many different furniture companies the district is using to test out which furniture the students and staff like the most for the new \$145 million school building when it opens in Fall 2024.

“The furniture mock-ups were provided based on popular furniture samples. They are not items that have been selected for the new school, they are items for us to try out and see what we like, what we think functions, and what we don’t like. The people who provided the furniture are the ones who decided what we were getting,” said GJHS principal Meghan Roenicke.

GJHS assistant principal Heather O’Brien said, “The furniture designers philosophy was that they wanted to help transform education in this world where there’s not just desks in rows that seems sanitary, clinical, and old school. They are intentionally designing spaces so that teachers can mix things up.”

Some of the unique furniture you can find in the library are the three egg-shaped chairs that are nice to relax and recline in. There are also yellow rolling chairs that have small tables attached for doing work easily.

“It’s really just to see what students like,” Roenicke said. “The desks that we have currently are not super comfy and there’s a lot more research done around how different spaces make students feel. They take that research and they make furniture that has more flexibility for students that like to stand up rather than sitting down... It’s a change in the way of thinking about schools as our old furniture is very factory model like everything is the same compared to the sampled furniture they are trying to make so that kids are more comfortable and more engaged in their learning.”



Maddy Parkhurst

New furniture is in the GJHS library that could be selected for the new GJHS building when it opens in Fall 2024.



GJHS junior Baron Desmarais sits in one of the egg-shaped chairs that are a student favorite in the library. The chairs are being considered for use in the new school. (Maddy Parkhurst)

GJHS sophomore Brynley Gorman said, "My favorite furniture piece is the table and chairs by the window because it looks like a cafe."

"I really like the little green-shaped couches with the table. I think it's one of the most unique pieces of furniture in the library, and is a good fit for many people," said GJHS sophomore Mason Bunce.

Administration wants feedback on the new furnishings to determine what everyone prefers. Students were interviewed for their opinion on the new furniture.

GJHS sophomore McCovey Tobin said, "I think that the old furniture was tacky, wasn't the best but wasn't the worst, and the new furniture definitely made an improvement and is obviously better."

The simple chairs and desks are a bright green. Some old table and chairs remain in the library from 1983.

"The new furniture provides much more room to converse with friends and spread out your stuff in the event that you ever need to do so," said Bunce.

The classrooms that have new furniture are social studies teacher Christine Spillane in Room 304 and social studies teacher Lisa Moot in Room 303. Classrooms featuring new technology are art teacher Sean Henry in Room 705 and business teacher Suzanne Dunlap in Room 102.

"Most students prefer the new furniture. It's just more comfortable, more flexible, and there's a variety of options so they can choose furniture that fits their personality best," said Spillane.

"The new school should have a lot more variety of furniture. Making sure that it does have a classroom full of desks and chairs we can move the chairs and the desks around more purposefully. There are some classrooms that have tables, and tables are great sometimes but there are times where we don't want tables and then there's times where we do want tables so it's just about being able to move things how you want them," said Roenicke.

GJHS Librarian Pam Middlemas said, "It is definitely worth investing in school grade furniture for our new building." Meaning she thinks it should be more durable and will be worth spending the money on in the long-term.

Overall, the furniture that is placed throughout the school as of recently won't necessarily be the exact furniture going in the new school. Decisions are still being made about what company and designs will fit the needs the most.

Roenicke and O'Brien said they don't exactly know what the school's budget is for the furniture.

"If we can transform the space, we can transform the teaching," said O'Brien.