“The mission of the Monarch School is to educate students impacted by homelessness and to help them develop hope for a future with the necessary skills and experiences for personal success.” – Monarch School

academic growth  emotional growth  social growth  life skills
23,000 children affected by homelessness in the San Diego County, Monarch School serves up to 350 of these students each day.

“We know education is the key to success for homeless students. In order to meet our student’s unique needs, Monarch has developed an innovative approach to learning where students gain the skills they need to improve their lives, develop awareness of their emotions and healthy coping skills, explore their passions and plan for a life of self-sufficient living. Monarch provides students with a safe, stable environment for learning with wraparound services to meet their basic needs.”
The value of support is evident in this project, as well as everyday at Monarch School. Gifts from major donors made the renovation possible, and a ribbon cutting ceremony well attended by the city and local community showed the support and love for Monarch’s mission. With an active internship program already in place at the school, the new space gives the program a home where representatives from different career or college opportunities can come in to talk and work with students. The space is easily divisible with a range of acoustic options that allow multiple groups to meet at the same time.
The Launch Pointe, designed as a “stage for learning”, is zoned to support design thinking in any number of hands-on, tinkering or digital pathways. Students move between zones as they work through the creative process. From digital and tactile exploration, to decompressing/regrouping, to building physical models and giving presentations; the creative process is supported in the educational environment. Students gain confidence as they have the opportunity to learn and explore their individual learning preferences.
NO MONEY, AN EMPTY SPACE, AND AN IDEA

The Launch Pointe project began with a vision, but with no money. As an empty space with an idea of how the room could help transform their students’ lives through an active and engaging learning environment, the Launch Point was a planning process which included meeting with the design team and the school’s career director, quickly advancing to an immediate discovery of the greatest need this space could fill: A safe place for the school’s high school age students to gather, own, and explore their futures in; a place these students could call home in times of personal struggle or eagerness to explore who they will be beyond the doors of Monarch School.
Passionately stated by Monarch School, “[…] In order to meet our student’s unique needs, Monarch has developed an innovative approach to learning where students gain the skills they need to improve their lives, develop awareness of their emotions and healthy coping skills, explore their passions and plan for a life of self-sufficient living […].” The physical environment is the built response to resourcefulness, creativity and opportunities.
The overall build out included zoning space based on activities and student centered engagement. The full Shop completes the interactive learning environment by providing a space for students to explore project development to a deeper level of learning by engaging in hands on activities and prototyping ideas. The shop supports collaboration, safety and a mission of making resources available to expose students to additional career & college opportunities.
Knowing that every finish mattered to the overall budget, the raw feeling of the space acted as the basis of design. The exposed structure is a backdrop for the bright yellow pops of color used throughout to tie back to the brightly colored murals found around the Barrio Logan Neighborhood.