



MONARCH SCHOOL LAUCH POINT

SAN DIEGO, CA

*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. The Launch Point is a space designed for students to find their **place and impact in the world.***



The Launch Pointe engages students in hands-on, project based learning that ignites passion to explore creative ideas, discover new strengths and visualize future success in college and careers. The Launch Pointe is designed to support a design thinking process where students learn to collaborate, learn to prototype and learn to design and re-design. It supports the four key areas that the Monarch School has identified as critical to their students’ success:
Social Growth, Emotional Support, Academic Growth, and Life Skills.



“While the space was always meant to be adaptable, students have really made it their own. At any one time you may see a math class, improv practice and college counseling happening simultaneously. While we imagined each part of the space would have a designated use, there are 2-3 more uses for each space than expected.”





existing space

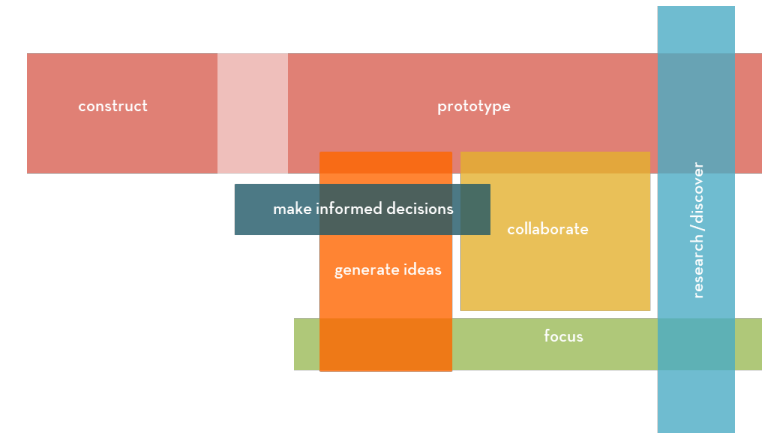
location | san diego, ca
type | non-profit TI fitout
population | 350 students
project | \$1.4 million
construction | \$1.1 million
center | 6,600sf



community The Monarch School is located in the Barrio Logan neighborhood of downtown San Diego. Currently there are over 23,000 homeless students in San Diego County. Monarch School is dedicated to helping homeless students break the cycle of poverty through education.

challenges Aside from financial challenges, the biggest hurdle in the project was the idea that the school and stakeholders did not know what they needed – they knew they needed something, but didn’t know exactly what that was. The asset was the student’s voice, so although the planning and design team didn’t have a curriculum or program to base the solutions off of – what we did have was the needs of the student population, the needs of a student who must find their place of impact in the world, the needs of a student who’s family is depending on them to further their education and career. The engagement in solving this problem was by going through a design thinking process. This sparked the inspiration for the entire design, the space would be zoned and designed to support design thinking, to support problem solving, to be a space that through how it is organized and outfitted helps students learn how to problem solve themselves and launch their passions.

The value of support is evident in this project. 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.



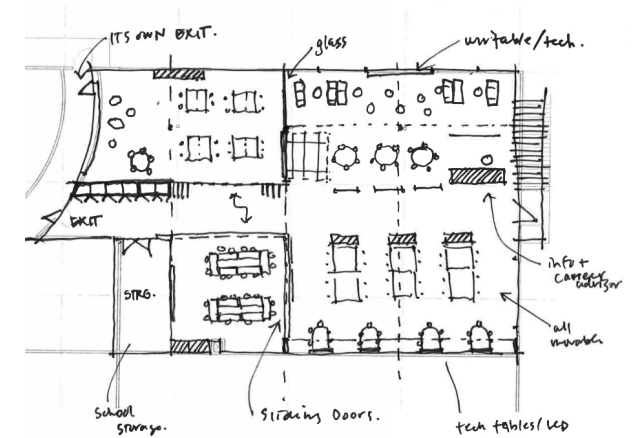
what’s in a name

The original concept suggested by Monarch faculty and staff was the “Learning Pad.” The high school students felt that “pad” sounded too elementary for the type of space they envisioned for themselves.

After brainstorming, all stakeholders agreed upon “Launch Pointe.” It exemplifies the idea that the Monarch School is the launch point for the students’ education and careers. It is the support they need for the growth trajectory of their lives.



The Launch Point is a space designed to support student agency, where students would be able to utilize and explore multiple modes of learning. It is a non-scheduled space, that is available to class size, team size, or individual users before, during and after school as a creative space to problem solve and explore the world of work. The overall build out included zoning spaces based on design thinking activities and student-centered ownership.



The physical environment is the built response to resourcefulness, creativity and opportunities.

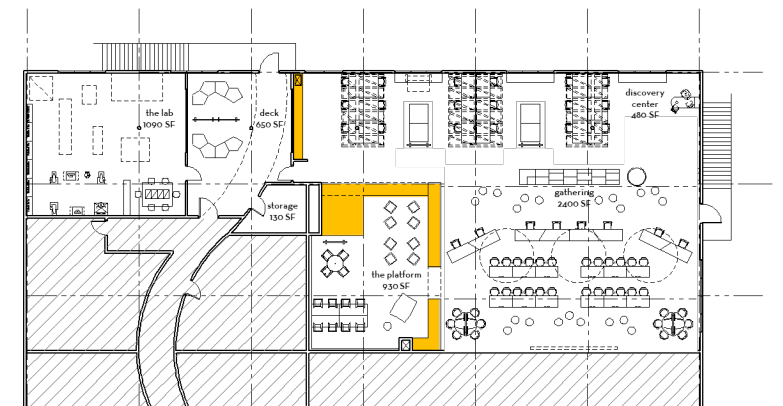
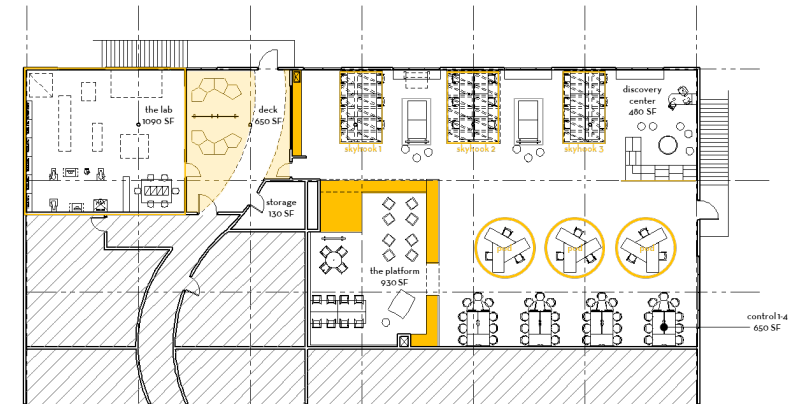
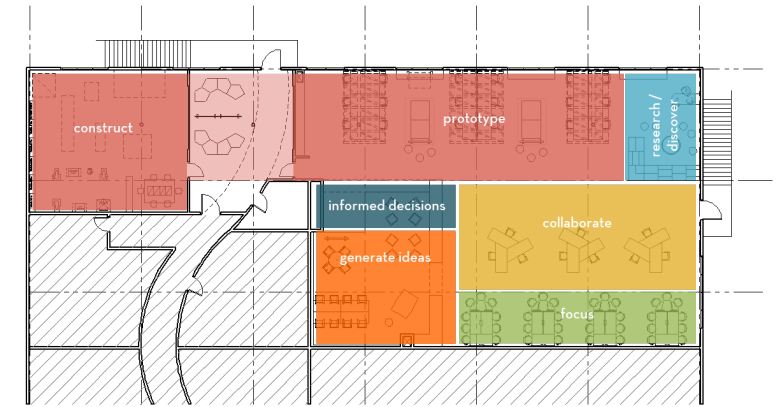


Experience Goals:

Experiment, Fail & Build Grit

Personalize and Choice in how to Work

Future Ready (future technologies, programs, or pedagogy)





The “build it” shop gives students hands-on experience with woodworking and industry trade exposure. The space is intentionally flexible to allow for future uses if interest demand unique equipment and set up.

The Prototype zone includes large island tables where students can create, brainstorm, test and explore their ideas. Slatwall supports small tool storage, the structural grid above allows students to hang and test projects and zones the area for focus and scale.





Individual Settings for Homework
Meeting Space for Teams

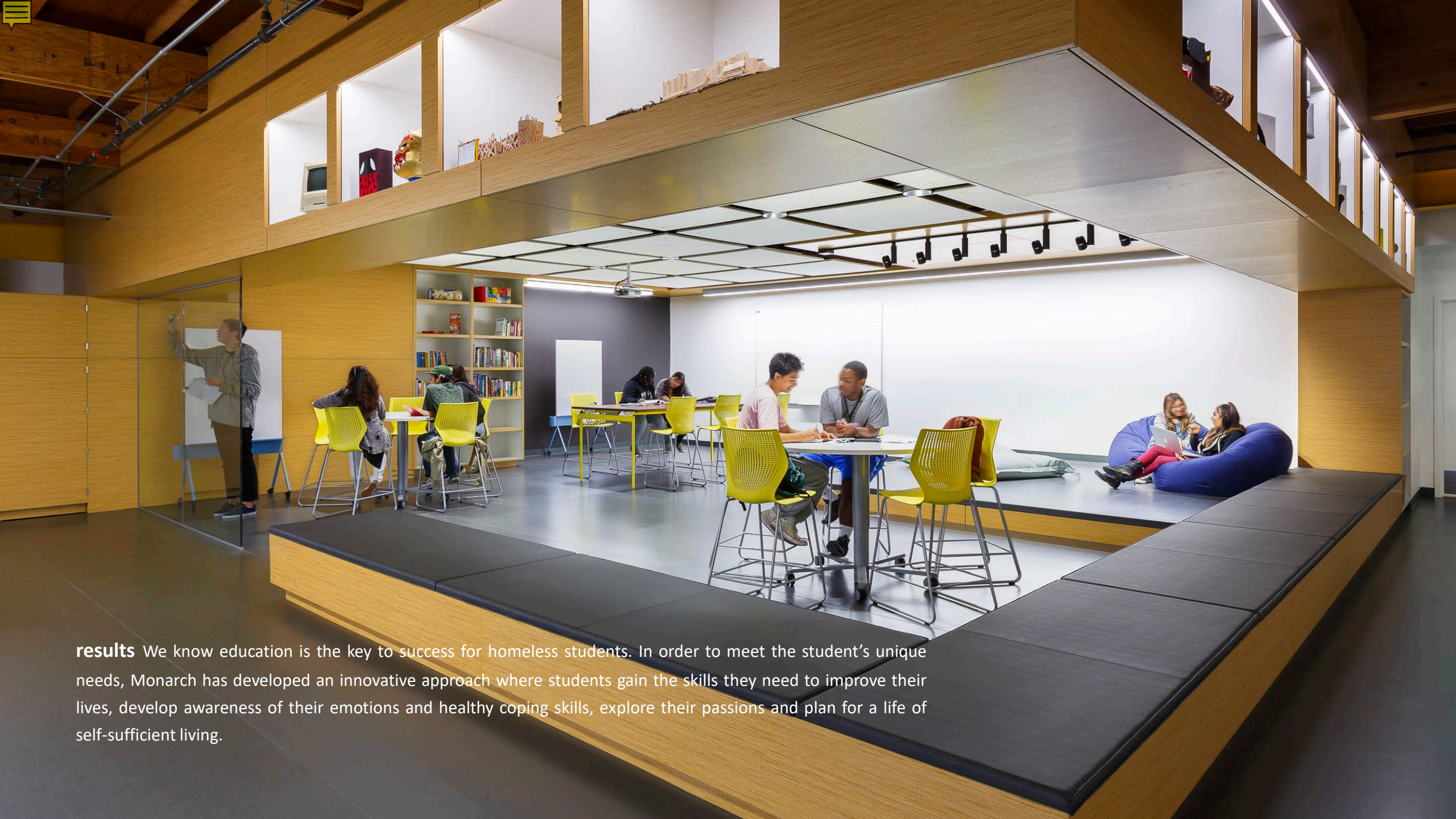
Standing tables encourage collaboration and
eye-level mentorship

Prototype Ideas and Build
Inventions

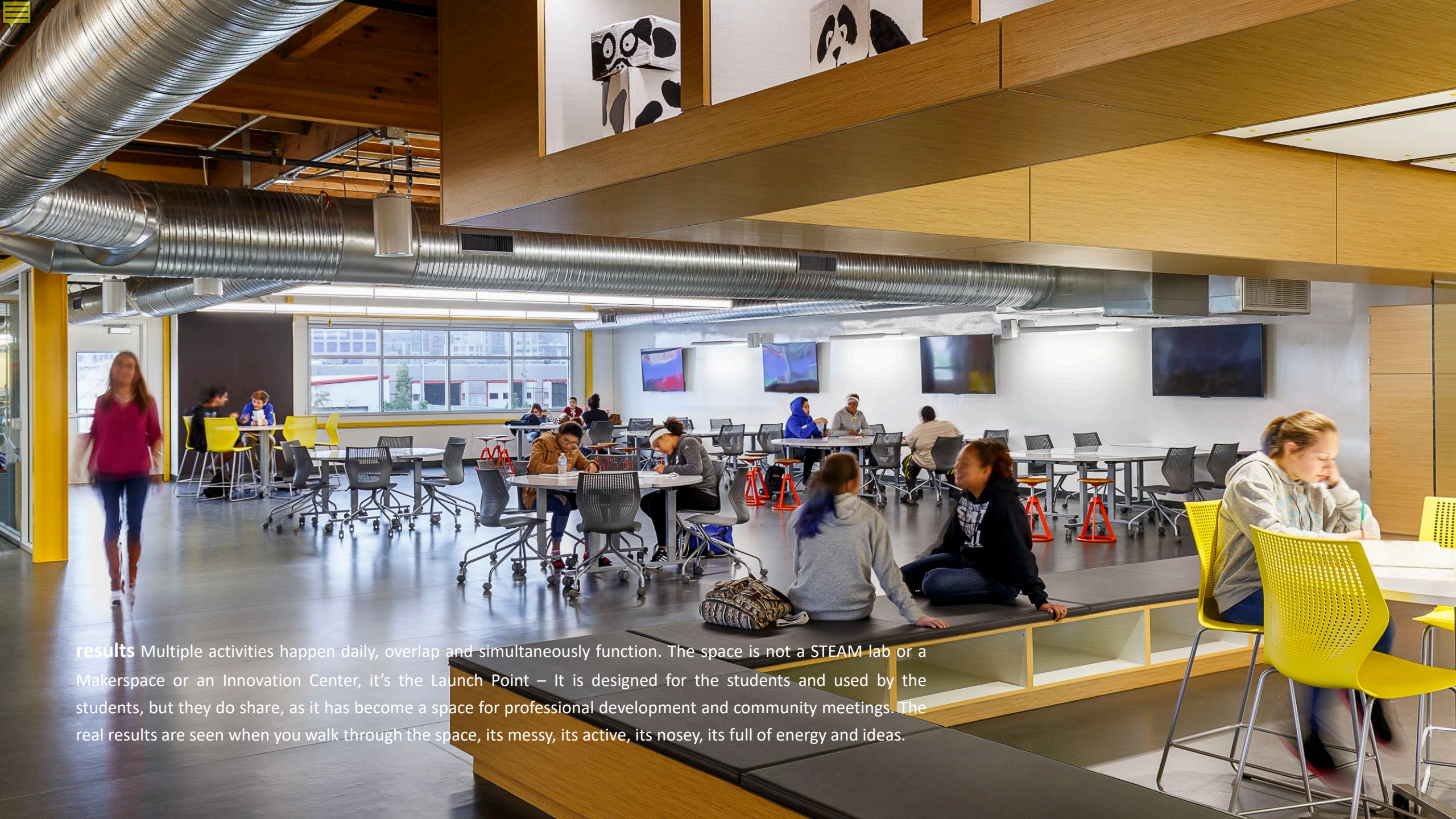
Small Group Work
Technology & Project Brainstorming

Teaching Area for Small Groups
Creative Project Storage Space

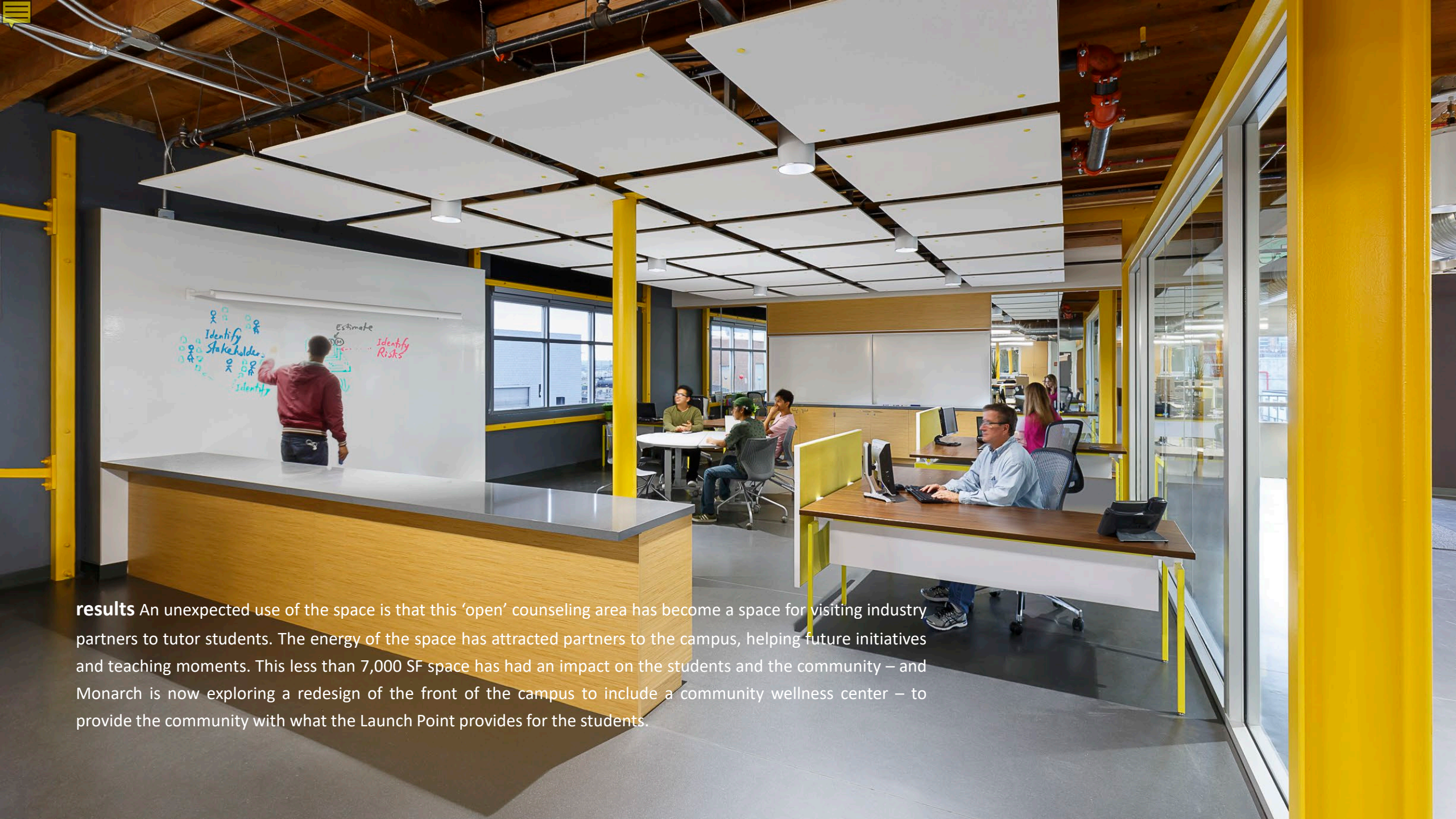
Space to be kids and lounge
And Huddle Together



results We know education is the key to success for homeless students. In order to meet the student's unique needs, Monarch has developed an innovative approach 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.



results Multiple activities happen daily, overlap and simultaneously function. The space is not a STEAM lab or a Makerspace or an Innovation Center, it's the Launch Point – It is designed for the students and used by the students, but they do share, as it has become a space for professional development and community meetings. The real results are seen when you walk through the space, its messy, its active, its nosey, its full of energy and ideas.



results An unexpected use of the space is that this ‘open’ counseling area has become a space for visiting industry partners to tutor students. The energy of the space has attracted partners to the campus, helping future initiatives and teaching moments. This less than 7,000 SF space has had an impact on the students and the community – and Monarch is now exploring a redesign of the front of the campus to include a community wellness center – to provide the community with what the Launch Point provides for the students.