

CASE STUDY

Burr & Burton Academy
Smith STEM Center Redesign

Future Ready: Adaptable Furniture Solutions
for Mathematics, Science, and Beyond

57 Seminary Avenue, Manchester, VT 05254

775 Students
29,000 sq. ft.



exterus
FURNITURE THAT WORKS



CLIENT OVERVIEW

Founded in 1829, Burr and Burton Academy is an independent school serving as an educational cornerstone for southern Vermont. The Academy's student body includes over 750 students grades 9-12 from 13 local towns, 15 countries, and many other surrounding communities.

With a broad and rigorous curriculum that spans more than 170 courses, along with athletics, performing arts, and experiential learning programs, Burr and Burton is committed to combining the personalization and care of an independent education with the democratic ideal of accessibility for all.

PROJECT SCOPE

As part of its continued investment in state-of-the-art facilities, Burr and Burton began planning the new Smith STEM Building to complement the look and feel of their recently completed library.

Exterus stepped up to provide expertise in furniture selection, design, and installation. The project scope included furnishing math and science classrooms, an engineering lab, and multiple student lounges and common areas.

Because of the scale and complexity of the project, the work was divided into two phases. Mathematics classrooms and lounge areas were completed in August 2024, and the second phase encompassing science classrooms, an engineering lab, and additional lounge spaces, completed installation in August 2025.

PROCESS

The design process was led by Exterus in partnership with Associate Head of School Meg Kenny, with initial input from SAS Architects. Faculty and staff played an active role, testing furniture



samples that Exterus placed on-site to ensure that every choice supported both teaching and student needs.

Flexibility and collaboration were central themes throughout the project. Individual desks rather than group tables allowed teachers and students to shift between independent study and collaborative formats. Science classrooms required additional customization, including phenolic resin tabletops, specialized storage for teachers and students, and adaptable layouts for varied uses. Lounge and common areas were designed to support both informal study and socialization.

Special considerations were given to improve everyday functionality, including ADA-accessible tables in each classroom, bag hooks, and chairs with casters where mobility was needed most. Exterus sourced from a range of trusted manufacturers, including KI, SitOnIt, 9to5, and Teknion. Exterus also procured Ghent whiteboards through a group purchasing contract to maximize savings.

Throughout the process, Exterus coordinated closely with the school's construction schedule to ensure a smooth installation, adjusting timelines as needed to align with building readiness and project milestones.

OUTCOME

The completed Smith STEM Building brings Burr and Burton's vision to life by extending the school's visual aesthetic across new spaces while supporting the school's mission to provide flexible, engaging, and inclusive learning environments. Highly adaptable classrooms, specialized engineering and science learning spaces, and welcoming lounge areas all offer connection and support learning. Most importantly, the project reflects Burr and Burton Academy's dedication to excellence in academics, athletics, and the arts by ensuring that its facilities meet the needs of today's students while preparing them for the future.



