

CASE STUDY

Leonard ISD - Doing More for Students by Rethinking the Default



Project Overview

District: Leonard ISD (Texas)

Project Type: New school build

Furniture Budget: \$500,000 (entire building)

Dealer Partner: Lone Star Furnishings | Travis Taylor

Marco Team: Christina Griffin (Regional Sales Executive),

Angie Zilm (Director of Sales), Richard Davidson (CEO),

The Challenge

The Challenge Leonard ISD was building its first new school in more than 50 years—a once-in-a-generation project for a small Texas community. With a fixed furniture budget of \$500,000 for the entire building and no flexibility for cost overruns, every decision had to stretch limited dollars as far as possible.

Lone Star Furnishings, the education dealer leading the project, initially specified classroom furniture based on long-standing vendor relationships. These were familiar choices—partners that had been used for years. But as the project progressed, pricing pressures, service gaps, and communication challenges became increasingly apparent. The original plan was not going to meet the district's budget, and there was no additional funding available.

As Travis Taylor of Lone Star Furnishings explained, this is a common challenge when working with large, high-volume manufacturers: *"You don't always get that personal interaction. It becomes more about cranking out product and making the sale. And sometimes the attentiveness to detail just isn't there."* The situation highlighted a broader issue many dealers face: relying on the default simply because that's how it's always been done. In an environment where school budgets are tighter and expectations are higher, familiarity alone isn't enough.

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The Pivot

Recognizing the urgency, Travis Taylor of Lone Star Furnishings reached out to Christina Griffin, Marco's Regional Sales Executive for Central Texas, with a critical question: Could Marco replace the originally specified classroom furniture—and still meet the budget and timeline?

Switching manufacturers mid-project wasn't the easy choice. It meant stepping outside a long-standing comfort zone. But staying the course meant sacrificing outcomes for students. *"We truly*

believe the students and the district shouldn't have to suffer or get less just because of a restricted budget," Taylor shared. *"When we looked at Marco, we saw similar design, we knew the quality and service would be there, and we thought—why not give them a chance?"* That decision changed everything.

The Marco Solution

Marco moved quickly. Christina Griffin took the existing specifications and alternates and turned around a full requote of the entire classroom package within 24 hours, replacing the previously specified products with Marco solutions—without sacrificing design, quality, or performance.

"I reached out and said, 'I'm not super familiar with the product—we're new to this partnership,'" said Taylor. *"Immediately she jumped on it. Everything was turned around within 24 hours. The responsiveness and eagerness to find a solution—that was rare."* Marco didn't just meet the budget—they beat it.



Classroom featuring Apex™ Desks and Tables



The project came in under budget, allowing Leonard ISD to reallocate savings toward new playground equipment, expanding opportunities for students beyond the classroom.

To reinforce the partnership, Marco CEO Richard Davidson personally traveled to Texas, meeting with Lone Star Furnishings, reviewing product selections, and supporting the project firsthand. *“That made a huge impression,”* Taylor said. *“You feel like you’re important. And that’s not something you always get.”*

Communication That Changed the Experience

Clear, consistent communication became a defining difference. *“A lot of breakdowns on big projects come from communication,”* Taylor explained. *“With Marco, that just didn’t happen. They were transparent, responsive, and willing to work through problems instead of avoiding them.”*

Marco worked seamlessly with both Taylor and his project coordinator—providing fast answers, accurate pricing, and proactive coordination throughout production, delivery, and installation. *“It made my job very easy,”* Taylor said. *“And when my job is easy, my customer’s experience is better.”*



Teaching station featuring Apex™ Horseshoe Table

The Outcome

- Delivered under the \$500K furniture budget
- Savings funded new playground equipment
- High-quality, durable classroom furniture
- On-time delivery and installation
- Zero damaged product. Zero delays. Zero punch issues.

“Not one item came in scratched. No missing hardware. No delays,” Taylor noted. *“We weren’t waiting weeks after school started to finish classrooms. It was phenomenal.”*

Sara Day, Principal of Leonard ISD, was thrilled with the outcome—from the quality of the furniture to the smooth installation and, most importantly, the ability to provide more for students within a limited budget.



The Impact

What began as a budget challenge became a long-term partnership. *"Since this project, I've continued to implement Marco into my scopes," Taylor shared. "The quality is consistent. The service is consistent. And when the end user is happy, I'm happy."*

For Lone Star Furnishings, Marco proved to be a responsive, dependable partner—one who communicates clearly, solves problems, and protects the dealer relationship. For Leonard ISD, Marco delivered quality, value, and care—without compromise.



Classroom featuring Apex™ Desks with book boxes

A Lesson Worth Sharing

The Leonard ISD project is a reminder that the best outcomes often come from asking better questions—not simply following past patterns. *"Why go with a larger manufacturer when you're not sacrificing anything by going with Marco?" Taylor said. "I don't see a downside to at least giving them a shot."*

Marco's willingness to be honest, collaborative, and solutions-focused stood out. *"They'll tell you if something isn't the right fit," Taylor added. "That honesty matters. That's how you build trust."*

Why Marco

At Marco, we believe:

- Budgets are real—and deserve respect
- Dealers deserve partners who go to bat for them
- Schools deserve solutions that do more with less
- Relationships matter more than routines

As Travis Taylor summed it up: *"Working with Marco has been an example of an ideal partner—someone who cares, communicates, and works to find solutions."*

Marco. Where Learning Takes Shape.

