



**Form**  
Inspired Product + Material Choices

## Ida Crown Jewish Academy Skokie, Ill.

A renovation of the legacy suburban Chicago Rand McNally printing press, the new Ida Crown Jewish Academy (ICJA) opened its doors in Dec. 2014, uniquely designed to accommodate the 21st century digital—not print—student. For one, the library and cafeteria were built without interior walls separating the two. Instead, the spaces flow into each other, separated only by a charging station for students who receive iPads as incoming freshmen. Communal areas and messaging TVs are everywhere where students congregate, study and pray. “They wanted something that would project a new era of the school inside and out, as the previous building lasted 50 years,” says Brian Walter, senior partner, Amstadter Architects, Chicago. The 91,000-sq.-ft. private high school features 27 classrooms—six have the ability to be divisible, yielding 33 classroom spaces—for its dual curriculum in Judaic and general studies and is currently home to 275 students and 55 faculty members, but with the new building, the school has the ability to almost double its population down the road.



**Brian Walter, NCARB, LEED AP**, for 30 years, senior partner at Amstadter Architects, has been designing schools, health-care facilities, data centers, corporate interiors, retail spaces and broadcast facilities.

Photography: David Seide/definedspace.com

### Columns

Extruded Aluminum,  
Kawneer

In order to tie the one-story, 91,000-sq.-ft. building together that’s spread out across three entrances, Walter used a series of custom columns at each, filled with structural steel so they wouldn’t deflect, and capped in Kawneer extruded aluminum. “I wanted to create a route, so to speak—a controlled entry, allowing the observer to follow the building all the way around.” The columns say: “This is the entrance.”

### Exterior Skin

Cembrit True Fiber  
Cement Panels,  
American Fiber Cement

In the area, another school, as well as industrial buildings, are clad with masonry, so it was a foregone conclusion that they’d use masonry, says Walter. “But, we wanted a way to differentiate our building from the others so we chose cement fiber panels in different places to create an idea of a lighter element than the masonry, to make it look different than the others in the area.”

### Curtainwall

Trifab VersaGlaze  
451/451T Framing;  
Versoleil SunShade;  
exterior window  
shelves, Kawneer

The Amstadter team saved as much as a quarter of a million dollars by using the Kawneer aluminum products as opposed to fabricating them of steel exclusively. “Since the building is on three faces, we needed a way to tie everything together,” says Walter.



**Pre-Cast Panels**,  
Custom, ATMI Precast

Pre-cast panels were chosen to adorn the only new construction on the project—the school's 10,000 sq. ft. gym. "We only had a year to build it and with pre-cast you put the walls up and the structure is complete," says Walter. "It was a good option for us in this situation in that it allowed us a little creativity on the outside, while allowing us to complete the structure in a timely manner."

**Signage**  
Pryor Signs

Since the building stands 400 ft. from the street, Walter knew he had to select signage that would be noticeable from the street; at the same time, he wanted to keep it sleek and classy. The result was the specification of 6-ft.-tall letters 'ICJA.' The sign was made locally, the font is Swiss.

**Bike Racks**  
"U" Rack, Belson

While exterior bike racks usually come in black or a galvanized finish, Walter searched around to find them in white to match the building's light exterior.





MATH + SCIENCE HALL

## Carpet

Amstadter tried to develop a color palette and mix and match those colors throughout the building. "For example, there are two colors in each area so there was a little bit of continuity, yet each wing of the building has its own identity from a color standpoint. The circles on the carpet tiles are used to accent in the space," says Walter.

## Extra Curricular

In the public learning spaces, like the science/math hall, direction lines on the carpet accent the space and define activity zones.

## Viva Colores

**Interface**  
[www.interface.com](http://www.interface.com)

## Ceiling Cloud

"The clouds were a way to visually create intimate spaces within this big space," says Walter. "The school can set the furniture up underneath the clouds, with spotlights under the clouds. The manufacturer, Rulon, was able to custom match the wood slat boards to our doors."

## Grille Panel

**Rulon Co.**  
[rulonco.com](http://rulonco.com)

## Furniture

Chairs and benches arranged in a circle.

## Raven; Rola

**ERG Intl.**  
[erginternational.com](http://erginternational.com)

Turnstone Buoys in white with pink tops.

**Steelcase**  
[www.steelcase.com](http://www.steelcase.com)

MULTI-PURPOSE SPACE



"This multi-purpose space is one of my favorites in the school—it provides the school with an education space for breakout learning and a religious space, without having an overly religious look or feel," says Walter.

## Ark

The traditional *Nir Tamid*, or eternal flame, is located within the Ark itself. The stainless steel grille set in front of the curved wood paneled back wall is based on the joints of the Western Wall.

**Vector Custom Fabricating**  
[vectorfabricating.com](http://vectorfabricating.com)

## Aron Kodesh

The Aron Kodesh, or wooden wall here, has recessed doors that swing open to reveal the Torah, or Jewish bible scroll.

**Kohout Woodwork**  
[kwicorp.com](http://kwicorp.com)

**"The math and science hall is a big space and we had to think of how to bring it down in the edges and go up in the middle, since there is a differentiation of height space."**



## CAFETERIA

The cafeteria is a true multi-purpose space, used for eating, learning and socializing, while lectures and seminars also may be held there. "Facing north, there was no reason to put shades on the windows so you have this great view of the outside," says Walter.

## Millwork

In the center are two pieces of millwork—and two modern-looking ritual handwashing sinks. Millwork on fixed sinks and base of the charging station.

NEVAMAR high-pressure laminate

[www.panolam.com](http://www.panolam.com)

## Lighting

Lights are suspended from the ceiling in long square light boxes.

Regolo Pendant Series

Nulite  
[www.nulite-lighting.com](http://www.nulite-lighting.com)

Atop the washing stations in the middle of the café, recessed into the soffits, these lights are an interplay between artificial and real daylight.

Skydome

Focal Point  
[www.focalpointlights.com](http://www.focalpointlights.com)

## Charging Station

The spherical grommet monument includes two power outlets rated 15A/125VAC and a dual USB charger. Generous spacing between outlets and flipped orientation of the outlets allows for bulky plugs and AC adapters to plug in with ease without interference from the desktop or each other.

PCS74/USB Dome (2 power/USB)

Doug Mockett  
[www.mockett.com](http://www.mockett.com)



## Furniture

Tables: Ria

Symphony  
[www.symphonytables.com](http://www.symphonytables.com)

Chairs: On Call Series

SitOnIt  
[www.sitonit.net](http://www.sitonit.net)



## PROJECT SPECS

**Project:** Ida Crown Jewish Academy  
**Architecture + Interior Design:** Amstadter Architects, Chicago  
**Construction Manager:** Lend Lease  
**Fire Protection:** Great Lakes Plumbing and Heating  
**Plumbing Engineers:** Normal Mechanical  
**Mechanical Engineers:** State Mechanical Services  
**Electrical Engineers:** Gibson Electric

## PRODUCTS + MATERIALS

**01 Curtainwall**  
► Kawneer  
Circle 387

**02 Skin**  
► American Fiber Cement  
Circle 386

**03 Columns**  
► Kawner  
Circle 385

**04 Pre-Cast Panels**  
► ATMI Precast  
Circle 384

**05 Signage**  
► Pryor Signs  
Circle 383

**06 Carpet**  
► Interface (Extra Curricular)  
Circle 382  
► Interface (Viva Colores)  
Circle 381

**07 Ceiling Clouds**  
► Rulon Co.  
Circle 380

**08 Furniture**  
► ERG Intl.  
Circle 379  
► Steelcase  
Circle 378  
► Symphony  
Circle 377  
► SitOnIt  
Circle 376  
► Vector Custom Fabricating  
Circle 375  
► Kohout Woodwork  
Circle 374

**09 Millwork**  
► NEVAMAR  
Circle 373

**10 Lighting**  
► Nulite  
Circle 372  
► Focal Point  
Circle 371  
► Cooper Industries  
Circle 370

**11 Athletic Flooring**  
► Action Floor Systems  
Circle 369

**12 Charging Station**  
► Doug Mockett  
Circle 368

## GYMNASIUM



Designed in the school's colors—blue and white—the ICJA Aces compete in a conference of local private schools of all denominations in their new gym.

## Flooring

Athletic wood flooring system: Action Aero HL

Action Floor Systems  
[www.actionfloors.com](http://www.actionfloors.com)

## Lighting

Gym lights are high bay and low bay.

HBLED Series

Cooper Industries  
[cooperindustries.com](http://cooperindustries.com)