

Woodward Academy History

On July 10, 1995, the Woodward Academy opened as an all-male residential treatment facility for boys ages 12-18. The 1980's and 1990's saw a rise in juvenile crime across the country, and Governor Branstad wanted to address the problem. Woodward Academy was created in response to legislation passed by the Iowa Legislature calling for the establishment of rehabilitation programs for troubled youth. The four students and 13 staff members who started on that day had no idea that over the next two decades, Woodward Academy would become one of the best juvenile treatment facilities in the nation. Those humble beginnings have grown into a school that has a student population of 128 students and that employs 200+ staff members. Every day, students receive the clinical services they deserve, are offered an educational curriculum from certified teachers, and are given opportunities to excel in high school athletics. Although Woodward Academy is labeled a treatment facility, it operates like a private prep school where students are proud to be Knights.

The Woodward Youth Corporation (WYC), a non-profit organization, was created in 1995 to manage the day-to-day activities of Woodward Academy. One building was leased and renovated from the Woodward Resource Center, which served as the first 24-bed dormitory for students. By August of 1995, that dorm was full and Woodward never stopped growing. In October of 1995, space for a second dormitory was added and in the following January, the Academy expanded to another building and its third dormitory in just under one year's time. Today, Woodward Academy offers 7 dormitories, four school buildings, and multiple athletic facilities inside and outside and a member of the Iowa High School Athletic Association.

Vocational programs include student jobs involving custodial work in the schools and administrative buildings, and during the summer a landscaping crew helps mow and maintain the campus grounds.

In the first 25 years, Woodward Academy has seen remarkable growth. More importantly, the first 25 years has seen Woodward Academy provide remarkable services and opportunities to at-risk youth who are often marginalized by society. As a school, Woodward Academy has proven that when expectations are set, and resources provided to succeed, students from all walks of life can excel. At Woodward Academy, success is a norm and it will only expand as the school continues to grow over the next 10 years.