

# Evanston Township High School.

The VarioCookingCenter<sup>®</sup>  
uncovers newfound flexibility  
and independence.



# Three functions, one appliance.

“It was very easy to implement the VarioCookingCenter® in our kitchen because RATIONAL made training our staff effortless. The customer support has been amazing.”

Kim Minestra, Director of Nutrition Services,  
Evanston Township High School



Evanston Township High School, a four-year public high school situated near Lake Michigan in the northern suburbs of Chicago, has a student enrollment of over 3,500 and 270 staff members. Kim Minestra, the school's director of nutrition services, oversees a staff of 26 that prepares and serves more than 3,000 meals daily to students and staff. The kitchen also provides catered meals for special events like board meeting dinners, athletic banquets and awards ceremonies.

The menus reflect Evanston's diverse population – vegetarian, Indian, Italian, Mexican/Hispanic, Asian – and the school's kitchen focuses on producing delicious, high-volume items like pasta, sauces, rice, vegetables, over-easy eggs, and pizza. Three or four specials are made from scratch daily like pasta Bolognese, jerk pork, stuffed green peppers or roasted chicken. Fresh produce comes in through Evanston Township High School's farm-to-school program with gardens, greenhouse, an orchard, and indoor grow towers.

Milka Marijanovic has worked in nutrition services for Evanston Township High School for more than a decade and remembers the old tilt skillet they used in the past. Food stuck to the thin aluminum, requiring painstaking scraping and cleaning between jobs. “It had no automatic cooking programs, was time-consuming because we couldn't do anything else but monitor the cooking process, and it was very difficult to clean,” she recalls.

In the spring of 2019, the school replaced its old tilt skillet, steamer and fryer with a RATIONAL VarioCookingCenter® 211+, and the improvement was immediate, elevating food consistency and quality as well as efficiency in the kitchen.



**Industry:**  
Education

**Core business:**  
Four-year public high school

**Location:**  
Evanston, IL



“In the beginning, I wasn’t sure I’d be able to use it properly. But after a month, I fell in love with it. I like to call the RATIONAL VarioCookingCenter® my best friend.”

Milka Marijanovic, Hot Food Production Lead,  
Evanston Township High School



## Perfect cooking in record time.

“The overnight cooking function saves time and labor, and the speed and technology of the VarioCookingCenter® helps relieve some of the stress and time challenges in the kitchen.”

“I am extremely impressed that there is a piece of equipment out there like this that is not only so efficient, but even tells you when you’re supposed to turn things over,” Minestra said. “You can walk away from the VarioCookingCenter®, and it buzzes and tells the staff what to do,” she said. “It’s amazing how much you can fit inside and get it all done at once, and the cleaning aspect is equally amazing. Nothing sticks, so we can move on to the next menu item fast.”

Marijanovic agrees. “I am very happy with how the products come out in the VarioCookingCenter®. You don’t have to worry about the food burning, you can control it easily, and you can do multiple things while food is being cooked,” she said. “It’s safe and helpful, and the end result is much better.”

The equipment’s speed in heating and cooking, ease of cleaning, and overnight cooking function has helped the school achieve cost savings in labor and water usage.

### The challenge:

- > Quickly and efficiently preparing thousands of meals for school students and faculty daily.

### The solution:

- > VarioCookingCenter® 211+

### Customer benefit:

- > Perfect results in record time.
- > Maximum flexibility using minimal space.
- > Easy-to-understand cooking intelligence that does it all for you.
- > The patented AutoLift raising and lowering system accurately cooks pasta as well as poached and boiled foods with minimal monitoring or checking required.
- > Maximum energy efficiency.



The latest generation, iVario®, is now available in the US market.

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