



Grand Valley School, Orwell, OH

More Kids, More Grades, More Floors, Less Maintenance Thanks to nora[®]

Two years ago students in the Grand Valley Local School District occupied five different buildings in northeastern Ohio. Today, students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12 attend one 244,000-square-foot facility in Orwell, Ohio.

The new building carefully segregates elementary school students from older middle and high school students and boasts three media centers, three computer labs, a computer-assisted drawing (CAD) lab, three gymnasiums, two stages, three music rooms, three art rooms, five science labs, 88 classrooms, two dining areas, an auditoria for theatrical and musical performances, Board of Education offices and a shared kitchen.

Selecting interior finishes for the state-of-the-art facility was not always easy for educators who researched products and relied heavily on the experience of Buehrer Group Architecture & Engineering, Inc. and the reputation of suppliers. This was especially true as school officials considered alternatives to VCT tiles.

At the recommendation of the Buehrer Group, school administrators looked at rubber floor coverings in general and nora[®] rubber flooring in particular. The result of this recommendation and conversations with school administrators in schools that use rubber flooring was what Grand Valley School Superintendent John Sheets described as "a leap of faith."

According to Sheets, "We have a lot of rubber flooring here, probably around 130,000 square feet, and to this point, we had never used rubber flooring in our schools. To help instill confidence in our decision, nora installed a test floor for us in our middle school band room. The success of that test gave us such a level of confidence and comfort with the product, that we eventually ordered for our new building."

Grand Valley School opened its doors in September 2005. Approximately 130,000 square feet of noraplan[®] eco and norament[®] grano greeted students in elementary school corridors, the elementary school cafeteria, second floor corridors in the middle school and high school and classrooms throughout the entire building.



Designer Jamie Ankenbrandt, an associate with the Buehrer Group, used borders and diamond patterns to introduce color in classrooms and hallways. "Working with nora products, I found there were a lot of different colors available to accommodate the aesthetic needs of our client," she recalled. "We selected four solid colors and two colors that incorporate color chips in them. Together these choices brighten corridors and add an element of interest to classrooms."

Ankenbrandt also noted the maintenance benefits of nora flooring. "The rubber floor is easy for the school to work with, and it decreases lifecycle costs, because the nora product does not need to be waxed."

Project Architect Brent Buehrer added another important benefit. "A building of this magnitude is going to exhibit inconsistencies in the concrete flooring from the standpoint of cracks. If you use VCT tile, eventually the cracks will transfer all the way through the tile. Rubber flooring is not as hard and brittle as VCT, and its increased resiliency eliminates the potential for cracked floor tiles. It actually helps to cover a multitude of sins, and from an environmental perspective, when you compare rubber to carpet, rubber flooring presents less opportunity for problems associated with mold and dust."

School officials had their own reasons for selecting nora rubber flooring, relying heavily on the product's reputation for durability and low maintenance. "We haven't been disappointed," said Sheets. "In fact, we've probably added at least 100,000 more square feet of flooring to this new building when you compare the number of square feet we had in the other seven buildings. Despite that significant increase, we haven't had to increase our custodial staff. That's the difference that a no-wax, easy-to-maintain floor makes.

"Comfort, too, is an issue for us," Sheets continued. "Rubber floors actually feel like they have some give to them when you walk on them, which make them more comfortable for teachers and students, and the nora floors have the highest content of rubber from among the rubber floors that we considered."

Sheets delighted in the comfort, durability and maintenance benefits of a product that also looked good. "The nora flooring has proven to be everything that the folks at nora said it would be," he remarked. "The product arrived on time, the installation went smoothly, maintenance is easy and the floor still looks like new. I'd recommend it to any school system that is replacing their floors or building a new school."

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 Designer
 Buehrer Group
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