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**Six Maryland schools showcase Rockfon stone wool ceilings**

***Prince George’s County Public Schools in Maryland opened six new public schools, known as the Blueprint Schools. For all six schools, architect-of-record Stantec specified Rockfon acoustic stone wool ceiling systems to support the health, safety, well-being, comfort, productivity and success of students and staff.***

Chicago (April 2024) – Starting off the 2023-24 school year, Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) in Maryland opened six new public schools. PGCPS is the first jurisdiction in the nation to use a Public Private Partnership design, build, finance and maintenance model to bundle the construction and maintenance of a group of public schools. Known as the Blueprint Schools, there are four building replacements – Drew-Freeman Middle School in Suitland, Hyattsville Middle School, Kenmoor Middle School in Landover and Walker Mill Middle School in Capitol Heights – plus two new schools, Sonia Sotomayor Middle School at Adelphi and Colin L. Powell Academy in Fort Washington.

As architect-of-record, Stantec designed all six schools and specified Rockfon acoustic stone wool ceiling systems to support the health, safety, well-being, comfort, productivity and success of students and staff. Each school features approximately 100,000 to 170,000 square feet of Rockfon’s ceiling panels installed in Rockfon Chicago Metallic® suspension systems.

Between all six schools, the ceiling contractors installed:

* 395,000 square feet of Rockfon® Education Standard 2-by-2-foot and 2-by-4-foot panels with a square lay-in edge in Chicago Metallic 15/16-inch suspension systems,
* 32,600 square feet of Rockfon Tropic® 2-by-2-foot and 2-by-4-foot panels with a square tegular narrow edge in Chicago Metallic 9/16-inch suspension systems, and
* 10,000 square feet of Rockfon® Koral™ 2-by-2-foot panels with square lay-in edge in Chicago Metallic 15/16-inch suspension systems.

“As the partnership’s architect, we’re designing innovative learning environments that reflect the needs of the diverse student population from urban, suburban and rural communities in the Washington, D.C. suburbs. The facilities will transform the educational experience by helping students discover their skills and interests. With flexible spaces more adaptable to modern pedagogy, the design offers innovative learning environments through small and large group instruction and peer-to-peer engagement. The story isn’t just about the savings and innovative designs—it’s about delivering engaging educational spaces for the future leaders of their community,” explained Stantec.

***State-of-the-Art Learning Environments***

Each of the PGCPS Blueprint Schools is designed to provide an innovative learning environment that meets the county’s growing enrollment, while reflecting the diverse needs of the community. The facilities transform the educational experience and provide engaging spaces that are more flexible and adaptable to modern pedagogy.

Stantec led the Blueprint Schools’ design in partnership with K. Dixon Architecture and Arel Architects, both are certified county-based small business, county-located business, minority business enterprise firms. Five ceiling installing contractors were utilized for the project, including Avena Contracting, which installed Rockfon’s ceilings in two of the new schools; and Rock Spring Contracting, Elite Wall Systems, P&D Drywall Contractors and Reliant Drywall, which all worked on one school each.

To create an effective learning environment for PGCPS’ students, the Rockfon acoustic stone wool ceiling panels present a smooth, modern aesthetic and help balance the schools’ needs for openness and transparency with safety, health and sustainability. According to Gilbane, the schools are all designed to meet the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED® Silver standards.

Rockfon’s ceiling systems support the Blueprint Schools’ requirements and LEED criteria, including indoor air quality, acoustic comfort, visual comfort, daylighting and more. All of Rockfon’s acoustic stone wool ceiling panels offer Class A fire protection and the stone wool material naturally resists moisture, mold and mildew. It also gives no sustenance to microorganisms, which is beneficial as children are often the most susceptible to pollutants in the air. Because most children spend the majority of their year inside school buildings, the design team focused extra attention to indoor air quality.

Rockfon’s stone wool ceiling panels have all earned have earned UL® Environment GREENGUARD® Gold certification for low emissions in offices and schools. In addition to being recognized by LEED, low-emitting products with material ingredient documentation are also recognized by the WELL Building Standard™, the Collaborative for High Performance Schools and other leading programs that emphasize sustainability and wellness.

Helping designers to make informed design decisions about product selections and specifications, Rockfon offers Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) for its products. Rockfon Education Standard, Rockfon Tropic and Rockfon Koral ceiling panels also are supported with Health Product Declarations (HPDs) and Living Building ChallengeSM Declare Label documentation.

To enhance the Blueprint Schools’ healthy, comfortable learning environment and academic success, communication and understanding between students, teachers and staff is key. Rockfon’s sound-absorbing ceiling panels optimize acoustics with high Noise Reduction Coefficients (NRC), which reduce noise levels and reverberation times. In the areas where acoustics are most crucial, Rockfon’s ceiling panels deliver up to 0.85 NRC.

Contributing to the visual comfort inside PGCPS’ school, the white surface of Rockfon Education Standard, Rockfon Tropic and Rockfon Koral ceiling panels have a high light reflectance that maximizes daylight to illuminate the schools’ interiors evenly and efficiently. This diffused lighting helps reduce glare on screens and monitors, making it easier for students to see and be more comfortable when concentrating on their schoolwork.

“These new schools show what is possible in public school construction through innovation and collaboration. The Blueprint Schools program is a model for school systems across this nation. We are grateful to our partners for bringing to life these fully modernized learning environments,” said PGCPS superintendent, Millard House II.

The design for each of PGCPS Blueprint Schools is similar, and under the program, all are equipped with science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) labs; a video production studio; smart boards in every classroom; voice amplification systems; media centers; dance, choral, orchestra, drama and band rooms; art studios; “gymnatoriums” with a stage; state-of-the-art kitchens; parent resource rooms; community clinics; multipurpose areas and more. All of the schools are ready for solar and electric vehicle (EV) charging with solar installation anticipated by autumn 2024.

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***PGCPS Blueprint Schools; Upper Marlboro, Maryland, United States; https://www.pgcps.org***

* Owner: Prince George’s County Public Schools system; Upper Marlboro, Maryland
* Developers: Fengate Asset Management (Fengate); Toronto; and Gilbane Development Company, Arlington, Virginia
* Architect of record: Stantec; Arlington, Virginia; Additional offices involved: Charlottesville, Virginia; Philadelphia (Spring Garden St.); Houston and Plano, Texas; https://www.stantec.com
* Additional architects: K. Dixon Architecture PLLC; Largo, Maryland; https://www.kdixonarchitecture.com; and Arel Architects Inc.; Camp Springs, Maryland; https://www.arelarchitects.com
* Design-builder: Gilbane Building Company; Arlington, Virginia; https://www.gilbaneco.com
* Additional construction contractors: Warren Brothers Construction; Upper Marlboro, Maryland; and Corenic Construction Group; Largo, Maryland
* Ceiling systems - installers: Avena Contracting LLC; Baltimore; https://avenacontracting.com; Rock Spring Contracting; Kensington, Maryland; https://www.rockspringcontracting.com; Elite Wall Systems LLC; Silver Spring, Maryland; https://www.elitewallsys.com; P&D Drywall Contractors; Washington, D.C.; https://www.panddcontractors.com; and Reliant Drywall Inc.; Frederick, Maryland; https://reliantdrywall.com
* Ceiling systems - distributors: Foundation Building Materials, Capitol Heights, Maryland; Freedom Materials, Laurel, Maryland
* Ceiling systems - manufacturer: Rockfon; Chicago; https://www.rockfon.com
* Photographer: Tom Holdsworth

***About Rockfon***

*Rockfon is part of ROCKWOOL Group and is offering advanced acoustic ceilings and wall solutions to create beautiful, comfortable spaces.*

*At ROCKWOOL Group, we are committed to enriching the lives of everyone who experiences our product solutions. Our expertise is perfectly suited to tackle many of today’s biggest sustainability and development challenges, from energy consumption and noise pollution to fire resilience, water scarcity and flooding. Our range of products reflects the diversity of the world’s needs, while supporting our stakeholders in reducing their own carbon footprint.*

*Stone wool is a versatile material and forms the basis of all our businesses. With approximately 12,000 passionate colleagues in 40 countries, we are one of the world leaders in stone wool solutions, from building insulation to acoustic ceilings, external cladding systems to horticultural solutions, engineered fibers for industrial use to insulation for the process industry, and marine and offshore.*

*For more information, please visit* [*https://www.rockfon.com*](https://www.rockfon.com)*.*

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