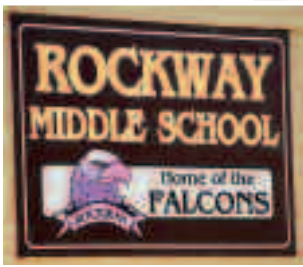


Installers' past success with the XP product in schools such as Rockway Middle have led to the implementation of a new drywall standard in school projects throughout Miami-Dade County.



National Gypsum's family of Gold Bond® BRAND XP® mold-resistant products stands up to abuse, impact, mold and moisture

Setting a new standard in South Florida school construction

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Despite concerns raised by a barrage of hurricanes in recent years, the Southeast continues to see record growth. In fact, recent census data shows Florida is home to 15 of the country's top 100 fastest-growing counties – more than any other state.

In addition to affecting air quality, transportation, housing and other quality-of-life issues, significant short-term growth places considerable strain on a community's public school system. In Miami-Dade County, that challenge is compounded by a statewide maximum class-size mandate and a preference for building new schools or upgrading old buildings instead of relying on portable classrooms to accommodate the fast-growing student population.

Several South Florida school districts, including Miami-Dade County Public Schools, have established new capital improvement plans designed to relieve overcrowding, meet the class-size mandate, and keep projects within budget as construction costs continue to soar. Instrumental in that plan is National Gypsum's family of Gold Bond® BRAND XP® mold-resistant products.

FINDING A SOLUTION

Last year, Miami-Dade County Public Schools hired four architectural firms to design adaptable, expandable, prototype schools for early childhood, elementary, middle and K-8 facilities. Then, it named four construction managers to build three schools each, all with the same design criteria and standardized specifications.

James B. Pirtle Construction Co. of Davie, Fla., received the contract for one set of K-8 schools.

"At some point, virtually all structures – especially in South Florida – experience water infiltration," said Mike Geary, executive vice president at Pirtle Construction. "Because of this, we proactively sought a wallboard product for the K-8 prototype project that was both mold and moisture resistant as well as cost-effective."

That's when preconstruction managers at Tiffany Construction, one of Pirtle Construction's regular subcontractors, recommended National Gypsum's Gold Bond® BRAND Hi-Abuse® XP® and Hi-Impact® XP® gypsum wallboard systems. The XP product line has been the wallboard of choice for Tiffany Construction's school projects for a

Hi-Impact[®] BRAND XP[®] Wallboard

number of years, and has recently been used in multiple locations, including North Miami Beach High School, Rockway Middle School, Centennial Middle School, Coral Reef Elementary School and Palm Lakes Elementary School.

“In addition to standing up to the kinds of wear-and-tear common in elementary and middle school hallways and classrooms, the XP product line also resists moisture and mold growth,” said Rob Noland, preconstruction manager at Tiffany Construction. “As a result, we can help decrease the likelihood of air quality and structural problems resulting from moisture damage down the road.”

Tiffany Construction will install approximately 14,000 sheets of wallboard in each of the three prototype K-8 schools. In hallways and other high-traffic areas, installers will use 10-foot sheets of Hi-Impact XP Wallboard, which is most commonly used in structures like schools, shopping centers, hospitals and correctional facilities, where surface abrasion, impact, mold and moisture are major concerns.

“We’ve been firm believers in the XP product line since it was first introduced several years ago,” said Noland. “Its longevity, durability, mold resistance, and cost-effectiveness make it ideal for school construction.”

Hi-Impact XP Wallboard is the only wallboard that resists abuse, impact, mold and moisture, which makes it ideal for corridors, stairways and other high-traffic areas in school construction.

In spaces such as classrooms, Tiffany Construction will use Hi-Abuse XP Wallboard. Frequently used in residential structures as well as commercial and institutional buildings, Hi-Abuse Wallboard is designed to stand up to dents, scuffs and scratches while at the same time delivering the mold resistance common to the entire XP product line.

Installers will complete all remaining areas with 5/8" XP mold resistant wallboard and National Gypsum's ProForm[®] BRAND XP[®] joint compound, which is available to provide a complete mold-resistant system.

SETTING THE STANDARD

For Tiffany Construction, the XP product line delivers dramatic cost savings and ease of installation when compared with other finishing techniques.

“Whereas more traditional methods can be labor intensive and design restrictive, the XP products are easy to cut, hang, finish, and, most importantly, reconfigure. That’s vital given Miami-Dade schools’ desire to build facilities that can adapt with the community as it continues to grow.”

A significant advantage of the XP line, according to Noland, is that, unlike comparable competitive products, it does not require significantly more time to achieve a level-four finish than standard drywall. When evaluating the line against other finishing techniques, he calculates XP products cut timelines in half when compared to veneer and plaster finishes, and that lath and stucco projects would require double the budget and four times the timeline to complete in comparison to the same project employing the Hi-Impact XP or Hi-Abuse XP products.

Tiffany Construction’s past success with the XP product line has been instrumental in establishing a new wallboard standard for future Miami-Dade County school construction projects. “National Gypsum’s XP products exceeded Miami-Dade County Public Schools’ expectations,” said Noland. “The product line is an easy-to-use total package with the added bonus of mold resistance. As a result, it’s now the product of choice for new school construction throughout the county.”

