case study

the challenge:

As part of a multi-year modernization program, the Norwin School District recently renovated its Middle School. According to project architect, Hank Tkacik, one of the design goals was to combine acoustics with aesthetics in public spaces.

the solution:

The school's library was one of the spaces that provided the design team with an opportunity to add a design accent to an acoustical ceiling, resulting in a ceiling that was both pleasing to the eye, and very functional.
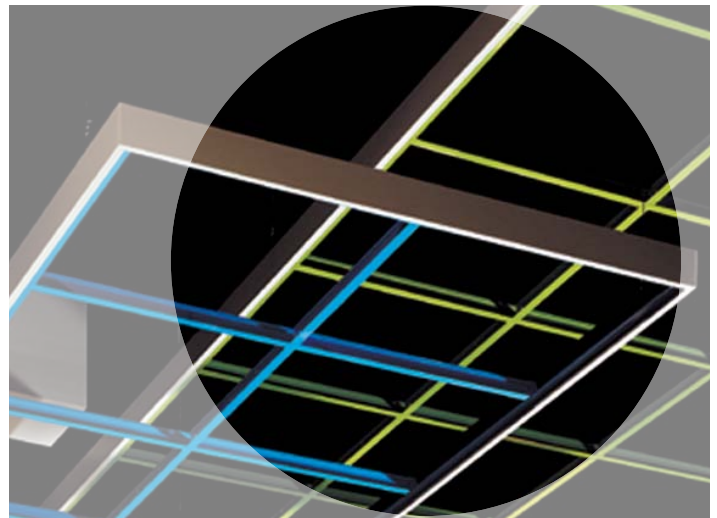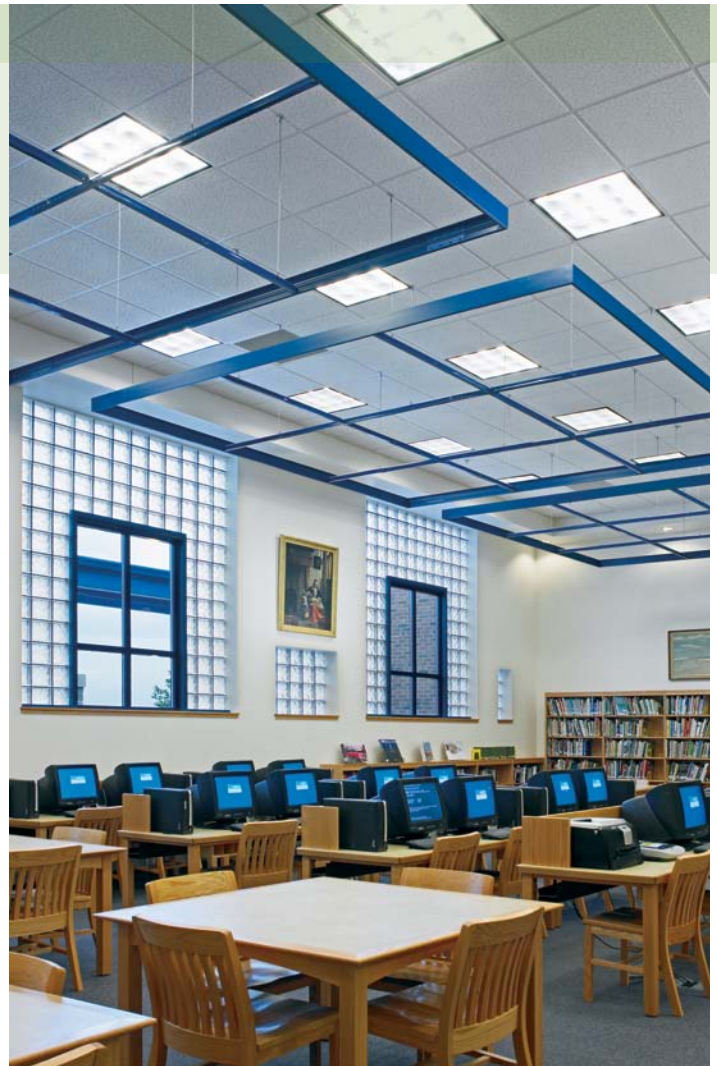
An Armstrong suspended ceiling was first installed to obtain the required acoustical performance. A series of "clouds" comprised of open cell grid systems was then suspended below the acoustical ceiling. Fashioned from 360° Painted Grid, the clouds consist of three 4' x 4' open cells in each direction, forming a 12' x 12' square.

Available in 180 colors in both matte and gloss finishes, the grid system's palette ranges from subtle to vibrant. In addition, all components in the system are completely painted to provide a continuous, clean look.

The myriad color options proved to be an asset. "We used the blue in the school's colors in the library's glass block windows," Tkacik explains, "and wanted to match it in the grid of the open cell clouds. The wide choice of colors allowed us to do that."

From a design point of view, Tkacik notes that the open cell grid tends to bring the ceiling down somewhat visually, but still allows occupants to realize there is space above it. "The open cell clouds also help accentuate the different levels of ceilings that are throughout the space," he adds.

Tkacik reports reaction to the "new" space by staff and student body alike has all been positive, proving the combination of acoustics plus aesthetics is earning high marks at Norwin Middle School.

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