

WESTERLY HIGH SCHOOL

STEM program department
23 Ward Ave
Westerly, RI 02891

Products used:
Smooth and Hammered Marbleized Rubber Tile
Pinnacle Rubber Wall Base

Westerly High School is not unlike many schools designed and built in their era. The halls are covered in VCT which was very budget friendly at the point of purchase, but required many layers of finish and continual buffing to achieve the desired look and fell prone to slippery entrance areas. Extensive matting systems became the norm to prevent slip/fall incidences.

When faced with the opportunity to replace the flooring in the new STEM program department, a solution to those and several other factors was the challenge. Current research links key environmental factors to health outcomes and students' ability to perform. Improvements in school environmental quality can enhance academic performance, as well as teacher and staff productivity and retention. Insufficient cleaning or excessive use of harsh cleaning chemicals can trigger a host of health problems including asthma and allergies, which can increase absenteeism and reduce academic performance.¹ Construction industry experts predict that by 2025 all new school construction will be green.²

Rubber flooring attributes for consideration:

Durability and Safety:

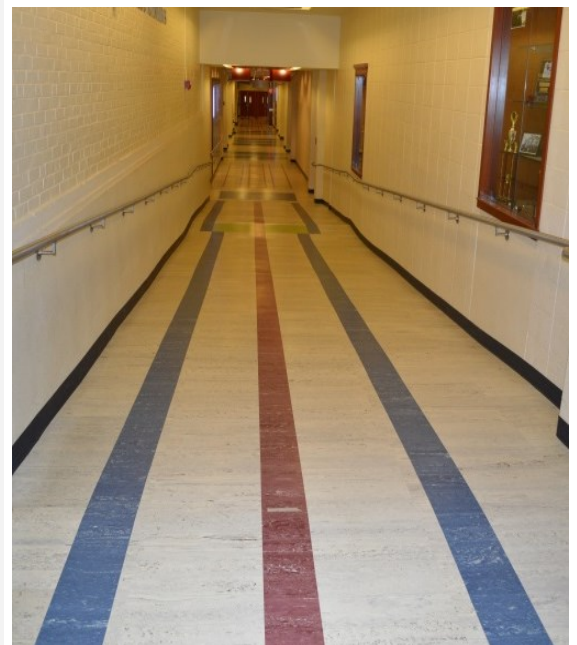
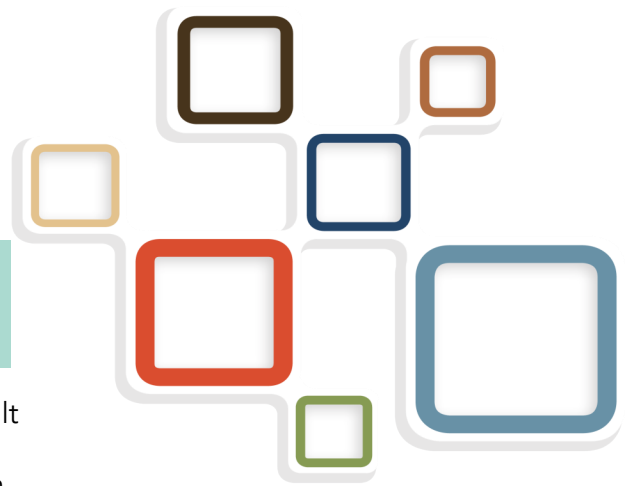
- Resistant to scuffing and scratching.
- Can withstand years of foot traffic without showing wear and tear.
- Water resistant, will not warp or bend like other flooring products.
- Flooring materials contribute directly to more than 2 million fall injuries each year, and slips and falls account for over 1 million emergency room visits.³
- Rubber floors offer inherent traction that helps create a safe, slip-resistant surface for stairs and floors that are accustomed to wetness.³
- Some rubber flooring products feature a raised design that allows liquids to be safely channeled off the walking surface.³

Acoustics⁴

- Rubber flooring is impact-resistant, which also give it noise-abating properties.
- Up to 70% of unwanted noise, and as much as 17 decibels of sound, can be reduced simply by specifying rubber floors, with reference to foot fall and impact transmission.
- Helps to reduce distractions in learning environments.

Ergonomics⁴

- Standing on hard floors all day can cause strain on the back and joints—even with comfortable footwear.
- Thanks to its flexibility (resiliency, elasticity) and tensile strength (capacity of material to withstand loads), rubber can help reduce fatigue on legs and backs—important for teachers and instructors who spend long periods of time on their feet as well as athletes who are training.



Design Challenges:

Flooring option needed to be easy to maintain without the use of finishes or abrasive cleaners while maintaining the original beauty –To increase safety over the currently installed VCT which posed continual slip resistance issues and required the extensive use of mats to prevent incidences.

The Solution: Smooth Marbleized Rubber Tiles in creative, unique design patterns.

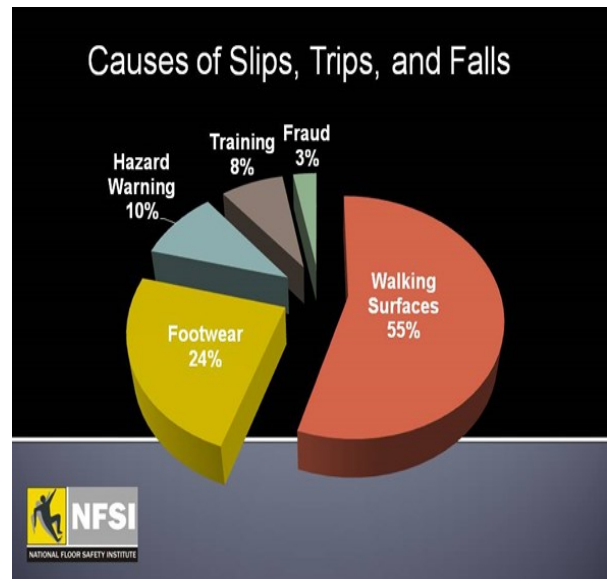


Design Effectiveness:

This area was designed to test gravity and friction roll rates for the physics department using carts designed by the mechanics in engineering. The different line colors and placement are the gauges to determine performance.

Maintenance Perspective on Safety:

According to Brad Lamprey, custodian at Westerly High school, the existing flooring, a VCT, was a challenge particularly at the entrances. They battle heavy moisture situations due to weather in RI. Because they were heavily waxed, they were slippery and required extensive matting for walk-off. Slip/fall incidences were a concern and did happen. Since the rubber flooring installation, Brad reports that they "haven't had a single slip/fall incident."



Installation Perspective:

According to Frank Venturini Jr., our contact at Regal Flooring, when asked about how the installation experience was with our product he replied, "No issues with the installation at all in fact we didn't even have a punch list after the installation was complete. It was easy to install and start to finish went really well."

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¹Student Health and Academic Performance," IAQ Tools for Schools and the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (November 2012)

²Dodge Construction Green Outlook Report," McGraw-Hill Construction (2013)

³Quick Facts," National Floor Safety Institute (2015)

⁴"Rubber Flooring is Safe, Comfortable and Even Educational," Laboratory Equipment (May 13, 2015)

