

Listening vs. Hearing

CEILING CHOICES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO A CHILD'S EDUCATION



Ecophon Gedina tiles uses high-density fiberglass to achieve a high sound absorption in quiet areas for improved student focus.

THE RENOWNED ACOUSTICAL SCIENTIST DAVID LUBMAN is said to have once observed, "We put kids in classrooms where they can't hear, but we would never put them in a classroom with the lights turned off." This reference is to the startling lack of attention given to the acoustical design of classrooms over the last quarter century. The capacity to understand the teacher's words can be compromised by a concept as basic as where a child sits in the classroom. If the student sits in the front, the lesson is understandable. If he or she sits elsewhere, it is not. This inequity is compounded for students with special needs who are part of so many mainstream classrooms across America. These special needs may include children with hearing and speech impairments, learning disabilities, central auditory processing disorders and those for whom English is a second language. Even the temporary hearing loss that results from the common cold or an ear infection can have a substantial effect on

a child's ability to hear the teacher on a particular day. The solution is simple: quiet classrooms. Unfortunately, achieving the solution is more complicated because of technical, financial and even political obstacles.

New to the quiet classroom movement is the U.S. Green Building Council. Their recently issued LEED® for Schools provides an acoustic element under "Indoor Environmental Quality." USGBC's reference to the landmark ANSI S12.60 2002 American National Standard Acoustical Performance Criteria, Design Requirements, and Guidelines for Schools may have a cumulative effect as more states mandate LEED® certification for public building projects.

CertainTeed Corporation is a part of Saint-Gobain Corporation, a world-wide sponsor of independent academic research on classroom acoustics. At CertainTeed Ceilings, the company feels it is their obligation to share their accumulated knowledge with stakeholders in this essential part of school design: architects, interior designers, school boards, acoustical consultants and parents. They recognize that only through public awareness will quiet classrooms become the norm rather than the exception.

Finally, access to excellent products is a vital component of this effort. CertainTeed Ceilings offers a wide array of products that combine superior acoustic performance with other technical superlatives. They are proud to be a member of the Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS), and the vast majority of the company's products are listed on their "Low-emitting Materials Table." CertainTeed Ceilings' commitment to quiet spaces is unsurpassed. Contact CertainTeed Ceilings and let them describe how they can help. ■

CertainTeed Ceilings

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