



North Education Center  
New Hope, Minnesota



Administrators planning the new North Education Center (NEC) in New Hope, Minnesota needed a flexible building to support the unique learning needs of its students. They tested a number of modular systems and found they all lacked in either performance or aesthetics.

Then they found DIRTT.

Seventy percent of the NEC's student population has special needs ranging from fetal alcohol syndrome to autism, and the Center is at the forefront of innovation in meeting their academic and emotional needs. The school also offers vocational training for older students. DIRTT's solution gave them the flexibility to meet those needs without sacrificing design.

# I've noticed a change in my happiness.



Not only did the NEC need the walls to be easily moved or replaced in the future, they had to be durable and acoustically efficient, something easily achieved by DIRTT Walls, according to senior designer Justine Pliska. "I don't think we could have done modular walls if we couldn't have accomplished these two things," she said. The modular walls, plug and play power, and acoustical management systems also give them the flexibility to accommodate office space, classrooms, breakout areas and teacher support areas.

Write Away Walls in each classroom are easily accessible by all students and complement interactive whiteboard technology that some students find difficult to interact with. For educators this makes teaching more fun, and gets students more involved. "I've noticed a difference in my happiness," said Bill Rehfuss, a teacher at the school who added that the kids are also enthusiastic about the walls. "When you give the kids more allowances to get up and use the boards instead of sitting at their desks with worksheets, they seem more excited about coming in."

Project supervisor Pat McEvoy found the DIRTT installation process very efficient. Everything showed up on time and he was also impressed with how quickly the project was completed, something that cannot be achieved in conventional construction. "It was interesting watching it pop up that fast," said McEvoy. "We can't get drywall up that quickly."

Using DIRTT, the NEC can meet the diverse needs of the students enrolled, providing safe and effective learning environments that will go a long way toward helping them build a successful future. "It's a healthy environment," says facilities director Tom Shultz. "The solutions we put into this building will really make a difference in these kids' lives."