



CASE STUDY | EDUCATION

Project:

Lincoln-Douglas Elementary School

Location:

Quincy, Illinois

Designer / Architect:

Klingner & Associates

Contractor:

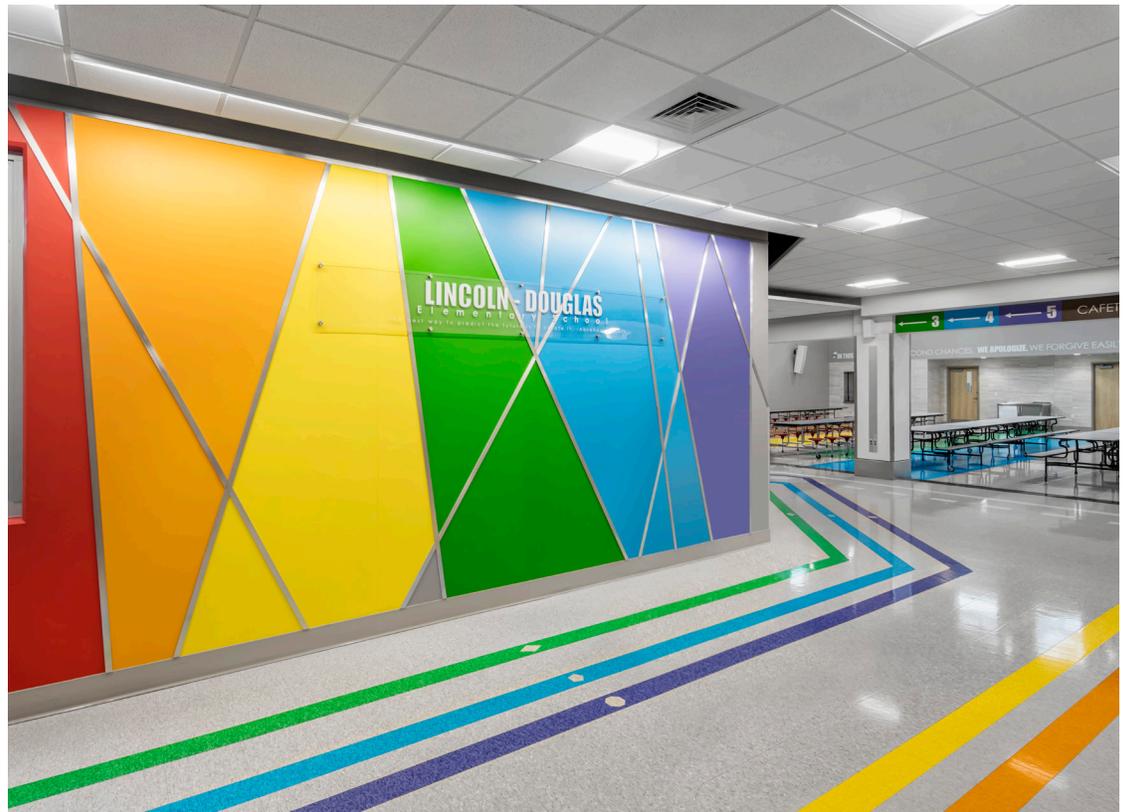
Moore's Floors

Armstrong Flooring:

Standard Excelon® Imperial® Texture

Featured skus:

57516, 57509, 51818, 57511,
57512, 57515, 51899, 51868,
51803, 51804, 51910



Lincoln-Douglas Elementary School Guiding Students with Color

Standard Excelon Imperial Texture highlights colorful wayfinding design.

Finding one's way inside a school can be confusing at times. However, it can be outright daunting and intimidating for a five-year-old. Quincy Public School District in Quincy, Illinois passed a referendum in 2014 to begin the process of simplifying their educational experience. Rather than each student attending four schools from the time they entered kindergarten until they graduated, students would instead attend three schools.

As a result, the school district needed to expand elementary schools to include kindergarten through grade 5. To help with this change, the district called upon local firm Klingner & Associates to design the new Lincoln-Douglas Elementary School, the first of five new elementary schools in the district.

For Jenna Niemann, Registered Interior Designer at Klingner & Associates, the project quickly became personal and served as her inspiration for solving a common problem in the school setting.

"My niece was going to be starting kindergarten at this new school, and I kept thinking 'how can I make this easier for her,'" said Niemann. "Because the full K-12 education process for a

student was shrinking from four schools to three, kids would now be attending a school that's a lot bigger. We wanted to design something that kept a community feel despite the size, and made it easy for everyone to navigate."

Designing for Beauty and Practicality

In a building that houses six different grades, effectively designing wayfinding included several challenges. Niemann knew upfront the need for a wide variety of flooring colors that would also color-match painted walls.

Armstrong Flooring's Vinyl Composition Tile (VCT) collection of **Standard Excelon Imperial Texture** checked all the boxes for Klingner's needs, which included using every primary and secondary color.

"The Armstrong Flooring palette of colors is amazing," said Niemann. "We weren't restricted in any way with design, and we found that to be important as the wayfinding design progressed. The sky was the limit in terms of our options with the flooring."



This project was selected as the 2018 **See the Possibilities™ Design Contest** winner, which challenged participants to push the limits of design with VCT.

“Jenna captured the right balance of energy, creativity, and safety, three elements of design that are critical for a productive learning environment,” said Morgan Lucente, Armstrong Flooring design manager. “She used our VCT products in an innovative way and extrapolated the floor design to every surface of the school, resulting in a comprehensive and powerful finished product.”

The 68,000-square-foot building utilizes a “community” at its core, giving equal access to shared facilities such as the cafeteria and gymnasium. Two wings, or “neighborhoods,” line either side of the core and are split by grades K-2 and grades 3-5. Clear, linear wayfinding to these areas was established through the use of bright colors and shapes assigned to each grade.

Niemann and Klingner brilliantly incorporated shapes into the linear wayfinding, adding an element of practicality for those that are color blind. Circle (kindergarten, yellow), triangle (grade 1, orange), square (grade 2, red), diamond (grade 3, green), pentagon (grade 4, blue), and hexagon (grade 5, violet) were all water jet-cut into the VCT, and then installed by local flooring contractor Moore’s Floors, who were critical in helping to ensure consistency during the installation. Additionally, a tornado symbol led to the gymnasium as the tornado shelter, and a dotted line with a first aid symbol led to the school nurse.

“I don’t think we really knew how much of an impact the wayfinding would have until it was installed,” said Niemann. “The kids are really drawn to it, and the teachers appreciate the navigation. Teachers also use it functionally to have classes line up on their wayfinding line.

“The bright colors resonate with the kids. It’s fun, it’s easy to navigate, and Armstrong Flooring’s vast portfolio of beautiful colors made it possible to match what we wanted to achieve in wayfinding with the colors on the wall.”

Impact on the school’s day-to-day operations is quite noticeable as well, according to Brian Trowbridge, principal of Lincoln-Douglas Elementary.

“Almost daily, we experience parents commenting on how nice it

looks and how helpful it is for them to navigate the building,” said Trowbridge. “Each day the students enjoy connecting to the use of color and shapes for their grade level learning pod, while taking leadership opportunities to show their families around the building during community events.”

Defining Space by Design

Inside each “neighborhood” is an Instructional Media Center (IMC) — an adaptable, open area that facilitates specialized, project-based instruction. Despite the IMC sitting in an open area inside the “neighborhood,” Niemann used intentional flooring design to define a space for the learning center.

A dark gray border defines the outline of the area, while a mix of greens, blues, and light grays splay playfully inside the border. This contrasts with light gray flooring outside the border to further define space in the open concept.

“When designing the area, we didn’t want a dedicated library, but a place for a lot of books that was also multi-use,” said Niemann. “The flooring clearly defines the space without using obstructive shelving to do the same thing.”

In one project, Klingner effectively defined space and established clear and innovative wayfinding with just the creative use of flooring, instead of relying on physical walls and signage.

“We’ve used Armstrong Flooring a lot for VCT in schools, and we know it’s a quality product,” said Niemann. “The color selection is tremendous, and it was Armstrong Flooring VCT that allowed us to beautifully and practically solve problems while meeting the school’s budget.”