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**Houston’s Thompson Intermediate School**

**features Rockfon ceiling systems**

***Houston’s new Thompson Intermediate School features a modern, high-performance interior with Rockfon acoustic stone wool ceiling panels. Constructed after Hurricane Harvey damaged its previous location, the new building provides an updated, resilient, safe, comfortable environment supporting 21st-century, personalized learning.***

Chicago (March 2024) – In 2017, many Pasadena Independent School District (PISD) buildings were severely damaged by flooding caused during Hurricane Harvey. The former Thompson Intermediate School building, built in 1972, experienced water damage previously from Hurricane Allison in 2001. As a result of Hurricane Harvey, the entire school flooded with storm water and proved disastrous to much of the building.

Opened in August 2023, the new 181,000-square-foot school provides an updated, resilient, safe, comfortable environment supporting 21st-century learning. To create the school’s modern appearance and high performance, SBWV Architects, Inc./GPD Group specified Rockfon acoustic stone wool ceiling panels throughout the building. GPD Group previously relied on Rockfon’s products for other Houston-area school ceiling designs.

A good acoustic experience is critical to support multiple learning styles in this dynamic floorplan. Rockfon ceiling panels deliver high sound absorption so students and teachers can understand each other, concentration and quiet study can continue uninterrupted, performances are enjoyed by audiences, and cafeteria and common areas manage an energetic atmosphere.

Optimizing acoustics with sound-absorbing materials supports the educational functionality and learning expectations for each room. Rockfon Artic® acoustic stone wool panels provide a good Noise Reduction Coefficient of 0.75 NRC and Rockfon® Medical™ Standard panels have a very high 0.90 NRC. Both meet the requirements of Thompson Intermediate and surpass the acoustic quality of many educational facilities.

“When Thompson Intermediate School suffered significant damage by Hurricane Harvey in 2017, Pasadena ISD set out to build a new, larger intermediate school to serve 1,200 7th and 8th graders. GPD knew natural light and flexible spaces were high priorities for the district and designed a facility that would be a desirable destination for students and staff alike,” explained SBWV Architects Inc./GPD Group.

Aesthetically, Rockfon’s acoustic stone wool ceiling panels denote a contemporary appearance complementing the school’s other modern finishes, updated amenities and specialized learning. The ceiling panels’ bright white surface maximizes the daylight from exterior windows and from the energy-efficient light fixtures.

Thompson Intermediate’s bright white ceilings accentuate the warm, welcoming interiors of the central library, performing arts stage, classrooms, offices, collaboration spaces and connecting hallways. Rockfon’s products also compose the large, rectangular acoustic ceiling clouds suspended in the school’s cafeteria.

Rockfon ceiling systems’ longevity, durability, and simple care and cleaning not only help maintain the appearance of the school, but also reduce the labor, materials and costs needed for the school’s repair and upkeep. Lowering maintenance costs was a key goal for the Pasadena ISD and its focus to operate a more efficient, resilient facility.

To mitigate future damage from extreme weather events, the school district relocated the Intermediate School to a 26.1-acre parcel of land graded for storm water drainage, and also prioritized moisture-resistant, resilient materials including Rockfon’s stone wool ceiling panels.

SBWV continued, “Traditional classrooms and flexible spaces are found throughout the new school to facilitate the district’s 21st-century learning initiatives. The focal point is a large, multifunction open area that serves as the cafeteria and venue for performances and gatherings. This space is distinguished by a curved learning stair that provides overflow seating for dining and events or the perfect setting for a variety of activities. At the top of the stair is a library offering study areas, makerspace and abundant views of outdoor vistas.”

Stone wool is a hydrophobic material, meaning it does not absorb water. Rockfon Artic and Rockfon Medical Standard panels resist moisture and sagging even up to 100 percent relative humidity. Made with natural basalt rock, stone wool also does not support the growth of mold and mildew. These inherent material properties support indoor air quality and the health and well-being of the school’s students, teachers and staff.

More than 100,000-square feet of Rockfon Artic acoustic stone wool ceiling panels were installed in Rockfon Chicago Metallic® suspension systems and finished with Rockfon® Infinity™ perimeter trim. In select areas, Rockfon Medical Standard acoustic stone wool ceiling panels also were installed.

The Houston-based team of Acoustic Engineering Company of Florida (AECO) installed all the Rockfon ceiling systems for Thompson Intermediate. AECO previously installed Rockfon’s products on several other Houston-area schools. In addition, GPD Group’s extensive experience with Pasadena ISD and other Houston school districts has involved selecting Rockfon acoustic stone wool ceiling products.

A large, open-concept, round library sits at the heart of the new Thompson Intermediate connected to a multi-level, curved “learning stair” where students gather to study, socialize and recharge. The library and science wing feature flexible room configurations that adjust from large group collaboration to small group study to peer-to-peer engagement. Personalized learning allows for movement with access to the outdoors.

“About half the school participates (in fine arts), and we wanted the kids to be able to perform at their own school. [There are] five rehearsal spaces for the orchestra, band and choir, and what’s so exciting is that you can have a full performance with a full-sized combined orchestra on the new stage. It’s so impressive how the classrooms are set up and how they relate to the stage, and now everything can be easily moved to the stage for performances,” Mark Varian, Pasadena ISD, Thompson Intermediate School’s orchestra director, told The Houston Chronicle. “Everything was just really well-thought out.”

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***Thompson Intermediate School; Houston, Texas;*** [***https://thompson.pasadenaisd.org***](https://thompson.pasadenaisd.org/)

* Architect: SBWV Architects, Inc./GPD Group; Akron, Ohio; [https://gpdgroup.com](https://gpdgroup.com/)
* Contractor: Drymalla Construction Company; Houston; <http://www.drymalla.com>
* Ceiling system - installer: Acousti Engineering Company of Florida (AECO); Houston; <https://acousti.com>
* Ceiling system - manufacturer: Rockfon; Chicago; <https://www.rockfon.com>
* Photographer: GPD Group

***About Rockfon***

*Rockfon is part of ROCKWOOL Group and is offering advanced acoustic ceilings and wall solutions to create beautiful, comfortable spaces.*

*At ROCKWOOL Group, we are committed to enriching the lives of everyone who experiences our product solutions. Our expertise is perfectly suited to tackle many of today’s biggest sustainability and development challenges, from energy consumption and noise pollution to fire resilience, water scarcity and flooding. Our range of products reflects the diversity of the world’s needs, while supporting our stakeholders in reducing their own carbon footprint.*

*Stone wool is a versatile material and forms the basis of all our businesses. With approximately 12,000 passionate colleagues in 40 countries, we are one of the world leaders in stone wool solutions, from building insulation to acoustic ceilings, external cladding systems to horticultural solutions, engineered fibers for industrial use to insulation for the process industry, and marine and offshore.*

*For more information, please visit* [*https://www.rockfon.com*](https://www.rockfon.com)*.*

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