

## Scranton Products' DuraLife Lockers® Bring School Colors and Style to Cologne Academy



Walk the halls of the latest addition at the Cologne Academy, a charter school in Cologne, Minnesota, and you won't spot a single metal locker. The halls of the newest addition are adorned with stylish-looking, durable, HDPE (high-density polyethylene) school lockers in blue and yellow, the school colors.

The relaxed progressive community of Cologne, with a population of just over 1,500, is located about 30 miles from Minneapolis. New parks, trails and a community center offer visitors and homeowners down home comfort while the new U.S. Highway 212 offers quick access to all that the Twin Cities have to offer. The Cologne Academy Charter School is among the city's proudest assets.

Charter schools provide an alternative to traditional public schools. They operate as their own publicly-funded independent school district, in which parents may enroll their children in a charter instead of the school assigned by their local school district. Cologne Academy received its charter in 2007 and in September 2008 opened as western Carver County's first public charter school. At that time of its opening in 2008, 127 students were enrolled in Kindergarten through 5th grade. Three building additions followed and today the school is home to more than 460 students from K – 8 from Cologne and many surrounding communities.

This new addition is the first of two middle school wings for the Academy and when it came time to specify the corridor lockers, Lynne Peterson, Executive Director and the Facilities Task Force wanted to explore the options – what type of lockers were available beyond the traditional metal lockers found in the corridors of the rest of the campus buildings? According to Peterson, she searched the internet for school lockers and came across Scranton Products' DuraLife Lockers®, one of their latest product lines and the first HDPE lockers designed specially for the corridor.

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*"I wanted something different, something a little more modern looking for the middle school," she said. She also said the students have expressed that having their school colors in the corridors adds to school spirit and instills a sense of pride.*

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DuraLife Lockers are designed to meet the demands of a school environment and withstand the harshest daily use. (Lockers are not 1" thick) Scranton Products begins with the best material – American-made solid HDPE that is engineered for strength and durability. Virtually maintenance free, HDPE outperforms metal lockers at a comparable price point, providing years of everyday low maintenance. They resist dents and scratches and their non-porous surface resists odors, mildew, mold and graffiti, making them easy to maintain. Today, these lockers are fast becoming a trend in the halls of many schools across the country.

"Durability and appearance were just two of the main attributes that led to our choice. In the five years since the Academy first opened, the metal lockers we have in the other buildings on the campus are starting to look worn. We wanted a locker that would outlast and continue to outperform the metal ones," said Peterson.

The lockers were installed by a team of volunteers led by Matt Lein, a parent of two students at the Academy. Lein designed the new addition and he stated that his opinion weighed heavily on the selection of the DuraLife Lockers. Like Peterson, he also wanted something different for the middle school. "When we designed the middle school we wanted it to have a more dynamic look, something that was different than the lower grades. These lockers certainly create that look so much so that the younger kids can't wait to get to the middle school."

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Lein also knows firsthand how the students feel about the lockers. "I have a child in the middle school and she and her friends love them, especially the colors. I think it helps change the elementary mindset and makes them feel like they've moved up."

In addition to DuraLife Lockers being the only line of solid HDPE school lockers that are fully fire-rated and compliant with NFPA 286, they are also GREENGUARD Children & Schools Certified<sup>SM</sup> for improved indoor air quality.

Because the surface of DuraLife lockers is non-porous, graffiti wipes off easily with most non-abrasive cleaners and stickers and contact paper are easily removed. The lockers can also be power washed and steam cleaned without the worry of rust.

According to Lein, he wanted the new lockers to be easy to maintain, since charter schools operate as cooperatives. "We have two different types of metal lockers installed in our other buildings. One type is so challenging to repair that instead of trying to fix it, we often move the student to another available locker."

The Academy had 170 DuraLife Lockers installed in the corridors of the newest addition. According to Peterson, aside from durability, appearance and low-maintenance, another advantage is that they make less noise than the metal lockers. And from the students' perspective, "They are thrilled about having a full-size locker, something they didn't have before."

The DuraLife Lockers were so well-received by students, teachers and even parents that for the next addition, which will include the second half of the middle school wing and a new gymnasium, Peterson and her team will again specify DuraLife Lockers. "They have performed so well and look so great that if I could I would retrofit the other lockers on our campus with these lockers. We'll never go back to metal."

