

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT.

AN IN DEPTH LOOK AT ~ Darlington Middle School



Bard Manufacturing
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School HVAC Solutions

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In this installment of “Let’s Talk About It”

we sat down with Larry Stegner, Carlita Davis, and Jim Wood to learn about their school.

The Community

Darlington Middle School is in Darlington, South Carolina, located in the eastern region of the state along the I-95 Corridor. The school serves approximately 1,025 students. Committed to excellence in teaching and the belief that all students can learn, the staff strives for student success through a partnership of school, home, and community.

The Choice

Meet Larry Stegner, the Maintenance Director for Darlington County Schools, who is responsible for roughly 2.1 million square feet of space in his schools. We sat down with Larry to understand why he chose to utilize the Bard system on his new school.

In 2006, the team was hard at work constructing Darlington Middle School. The decision to use the Bard system was easy in this case. The district made a proactive decision to standardize systems wherever practical. Larry said, “In the classrooms we have gone exclusively to a Bard exterior wall-mounted unit. There are several reasons for this; the cost of a 4-pipe system is almost cost prohibitive for us in a classroom setting. In addition, if that system goes down, the entire school is down. With the Bard system, if we lose one unit we only affect one classroom.”

We asked Larry about reliability and maintenance of the Bard system. He said, “The instances that I have lost a Bard unit are rare.” “From a maintenance standpoint, all the troubleshooting and repairs required are done outside the building so we never disturb the classroom and we can service them ourselves.”

Design Attributes

During the design process the Darlington County Schools team saw value in the Bard System. We discussed with Larry some attributes the design team discovered through the process. “Something that impressed us with Bard that I wasn’t aware of, was the availability of colors. When we ordered them, we could get them in a variety of cabinet finishes.”



We asked Larry whether there were any objections by the architect to using this system. He had these insights for us: "Architects don't particularly like them, they don't like things hanging on "their" buildings and messing up "their" lines. With the Bard units and building in a complimentary color selection, they virtually disappear on the building. You don't even see them." "We used the dark bronze units on Darlington Middle School because they matched the trim finish, and it looks like an architectural component of the building."

The district staff was persistent in selecting Bard's Classroom Preferred™ Solution for their new school, primarily because of the economics of the system, ease of maintenance, and the ability to control each classroom independently.

Operating Costs

Like most districts today, energy efficiency and reducing operating costs play a significant role in Darlington County. While energy prices continue to rise, the district's energy demands increase as well. Modern teaching methods and practices require the use of current technologies. Today students must be prepared for a modern globally competitive world. Educators must have the tools and resources available to educate their students. This new reality translates to more technology in the classroom, such as computers and Smartboards.

Additionally, the use demands on educational facilities have increased dramatically. Today schools serve beyond the traditional 8:00am - 3:00pm schedule. With increasing demands for workers to equip themselves to be competitive in today's economy, often you find adult education classes being taught in the evening. On occasion, drivers education courses are taught after school. It is not a rare occurrence to drive by Darlington Middle School on the weekend and see the school packed with students, parents, teachers, and community members for extracurricular activities. These enhancements to children's education and community involvement in the schools serve as an invaluable asset to everyone.

Schools utilizing the Bard Classroom Preferred Solution have realized substantial energy savings through optimal building performance strategies. Taking advantage of the unprecedented flexibility of this system allows the facility staff to tailor their operating strategy to the specific use of their schools. For example, when Mr. Stegner has an adult education class using one classroom in the evening, this system conditions that single classroom. In a more traditional HVAC system (4-Pipe/ Central) you would condition an entire building or wing to use one classroom. Obviously this strategy would significantly increase energy/operating costs.



Comfort and Noise

When it comes to HVAC systems on the market today, comfort and noise are a concern. We could give you numbers and ratings all day long, and we do. That's not nearly as valuable as hearing from someone who lives and works with the building and its systems. We spoke with Mr. Stegner and Mrs. Carlita Davis, the Principal, about their experiences with comfort and noise of this system.

Darlington County made a conscious decision to move to Bard's Classroom Preferred Solution because of its reliability, ease of maintenance, and efficiency. We asked Mr. Stegner if there are ever complaints about noise. "We never have complaints about noise in this school. I don't think you even know it's there and that's how it should be."

Naturally, comfort is a major concern in the education environment. We want to ensure the teachers are comfortable in their working environment. It's important to make sure students are comfortable so they can focus on learning. In a school the size of Darlington Middle, universal comfort can be a challenge for traditional systems. We queried Larry on concerns around comfort in this school. "I have never heard a complaint about the comfort of a classroom in this school. It is a lot easier to make our teachers and students comfortable with each classroom having its own individually controlled unit."

Aesthetics

The Bard Classroom Preferred Solution can be tailored to adapt to your building design. We offer a variety of colors and applications to allow your design team the flexibility to reach their goals during the design process. Darlington County had never heard a complaint or concern over the appearance of their buildings. In addition to colors and size you can choose to locate the system components inside or outside the building, while virtually attaining the same results.

Reliability

"Of all the systems, units, and manufacturers we have and work with in our district, Bard's systems give us the least amount of trouble."

- Larry Stegner, Facilities Director Darlington County

"This system has been really good for our school, I can't name any issue we have had with the heating and cooling system. I know it's very economical for our district."

- Carlita Davis, Principal



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