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CASESTUDY

St. Joseph Preparatory School

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Modular Classrooms score an A+

It wasn't long before Joseph Nawn, the Assistant Principal for Instruction and Learning at St. Joseph Preparatory School in Philadelphia, PA had to partake in a search for temporary classrooms. After all, he served 17 years in both a public and private school setting where the use of temporary modular classrooms was common.

St. Joseph's is an all exclusive catholic male high school centered in the heart of Philadelphia with an enrollment of 975 students and tuition at \$14,500 a year. The school was built in 1851 and is currently undertaking a 30M renovation. "We are at 98% capacity in one building and have 55 classrooms, 70 teachers and 50 non-teachers. Due to the renovation, we will lose four classrooms," says Nawn. With an aggressive completion date of September 2008, the project will add an additional eighteen more classrooms and twenty-five offices; however, enrollment will not exceed 1,000 students. Nawn was asked to take the lead to address this issue and see what other alternatives could be considered. They didn't know whether to place the students in the gym, dining hall, off site, or explore modular classrooms. They decided to investigate the option of using modular classrooms.

Quite a History

"St. Joe's has quite a history," states Nawn. "We pride ourselves in excellence both in and outside the school. Our curriculum is designed to prepare our students for college and we are proud of the fact that in the last five years, every graduate went on to college!" St. Joseph is a state-of-art facility where anyone who has a laptop computer can instantly access the internet. In fact, instructors often discuss current events live with the class. "Our classroom sizes are small and the quality of education our students receive is outstanding." Additionally, Nawn states "we exercise a strong faith based education both in class and outside the community." Students attend mass and are required to be involved in service projects. Students are often asked to answer the question, "what can I do to make my neighborhood and community better"?

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Do Your Homework

The search for a modular classroom provider was quickly underway. As is typical in many organizations, three vendors were called to provide quotes. Nawn states, “we pride ourselves in providing excellence in education and we expect excellence from anyone we do business with....and nothing less!” Through the years, Nawn has had both good and bad experiences, but what drives the decision is often timing. There was a window of about six weeks to get the buildings in place and utilities connected.

He began to consult his colleagues, ask for referrals and search the internet. He states that what helped tremendously was meeting with the individual providers, conducting interviews and calling their references. It was important to explore how serviceable the organization would be to their needs. “I discovered that some modular companies are nationwide and some are not. We wanted and needed someone in the area who could address our needs quickly and who understood our philosophy,” explained Nawn. After an internet search, Wilmot Modular Structures was selected among the three vendors to provide a quote.



First Impressions do matter!

“I was not necessarily looking for a nationwide company, but someone who would respond quickly to whatever questions I need to be addressed, and to fulfill this assignment within the six week window.” I need a human being who will answer the phone at anytime and who can offer the school that added personal touch,” adds Nawn.

Wilmot Modular Selected

“Before I received the quotes, I already had a good feeling which vendor I would be leaning toward,” says Nawn. “Wilmot Modular Structures certainly made a big impression on me! Not only were they close to home but they acted like a neighbor and not a big conglomerate! I know that I could pick up the phone anytime and the call would be returned immediately. I also reviewed their list of references and, hey, if they do business with the Washington Redskins and the Baltimore Ravens then I am completely confident they can handle our need for two modular classrooms.”

Wilmot Modular provided a picture of the buildings along with the building specifications. It was important to the school that the buildings’ exteriors blend in well with the surrounding facilities. “This is a great school”,

explains Nawn, "I did not want to disappoint the parents, students, faculty or alumni."

After Wilmot conducted a needs analysis, a detailed scope of work was provided that outlined both the school's responsibilities (permit and utility connections) and what was included in their scope of work. "I appreciated the fact that they took the time to review this with me, says Nawn, "that way I knew that everything was covered."

"All in all," stated Nawn, "I can honestly say that I have had a wonderful experience working with Wilmot Modular Structures. The job was completed on time and everything happened as they said it would happen. They completely exceeded my expectations, and if the need ever arises again, I know who I can call. In my book, Wilmot scored an A++."

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For more information about Wilmot Modular Structures and to learn tips on purchasing or leasing a modular classroom, go to www.wilmotmodular.com.