



Updating Technology to Reshape Today's Classroom

HOW STAPLES IDENTIFIED AND INSTALLED THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY TO MODERNIZE ONE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS.

CHALLENGE

The Wentzville School District needed to replace outdated interactive whiteboards and heavy projectors in its classrooms with technology that offered flexibility to its teachers.

SOLUTION

The school district relied on Staples' integrated team and its expertise to provide suggestions and identify the equipment that would meet the needs of its staff. After discussion, the groups decided on flat panel displays with screen-mirroring technology and carts that could move the equipment around the classrooms. Staples' furniture team quickly set up the carts and displays in each classroom while Staples' technology team provided technical support.

RESULT

Teachers now have dynamic classrooms that offer the freedom to educate and engage students from all corners of the classroom and building.

Leaders of the Wentzville School District in Missouri had a vision for a better learning experience: They wanted to create versatile, tech-enabled classrooms that would help teachers educate students in multiple ways.

Across the district, teachers were saddled with interactive whiteboards and projectors that stayed in the front of the room. The technology was outdated and left teachers with no chance to move from the traditional front-facing classroom setting. As a result, the technology dictated the learning environment.

"We need classroom environments to be movable, accessible and flexible," says Greg Lawrence, director of technology of the school district. "The reason for that is the various ways that we learn. Sometimes we learn in small groups, sometimes we learn in large groups, sometimes we learn better when it's just individual."

Furthermore, the district was growing rapidly. The increase in the number of buildings, staff and students created additional challenges for the learning environments to be efficient and effective. To provide more versatility, Wentzville School District needed classrooms with easily movable flat panel displays that allowed teachers to work from anywhere in the room. The district relied on Staples to find and install the right equipment.

Discovering Technology Options With Staples

"We met with Staples to discuss what our needs were based on feedback from our teachers and our tech team," Lawrence says.

With a robust wireless network already in the schools, along with tablets in every classroom, teachers needed displays with built-in screen-mirroring technology to make them interactive. They also needed lightweight carts to mount the screens and move them around.

To ensure that Lawrence's expectations were met, the Staples account manager served as a resource, coordinating meetings among key experts, sharing information and clarifying goals and timelines. After consulting with members of the school district, the Staples furniture and technology specialists partnered to offer recommendations, drawing on their years of expertise outfitting educational institutions with furniture, technology

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and the tools necessary to drive a powerful educational experience. Based on the unique needs of the Wentzville School District, the Staples team designed different solutions and provided various technologies to test.

Teachers sampled multiple types of equipment and configurations, subjecting them to the demands of the school environment and testing how movable, accessible and flexible they were. Thanks to the month-long trials, Lawrence and his team were able to choose the equipment that best suited their needs.

Seamless Installation

Lawrence and his team worked with Staples to ship the equipment to each school. In all, more than 200 displays and carts were delivered. Staples set up the flat panels and assembled the carts in just four weeks.

“I cannot express how impressed we were with the installation services that we received from Staples, from getting the flat panels mounted to getting the carts distributed and putting them together,” Lawrence says. “Everything was just ready to go, ready for us to roll in the classroom.”

After the installation process, Staples was there to take care of all cleanup, including recyclables and trash.

“It was like they were never there,” Lawrence says. “They coordinated everything, and it really worked like clockwork.” The installation program began in four schools, with plans to expand to 14 more schools in the next three years.

Effectively Engaging Students

With help from Staples, Lawrence and his team created wireless classrooms that offer freedom and versatility.

“When a teacher needs to demonstrate or show directions, or even just show a website or a video, they can quickly roll the flat panel out so it’s visible in that specific part of the room,” Lawrence says. “The next day, they have the opportunity to roll that cart into the back of the room or another location.”

Some teachers have even put the flat panels in the hallways for a demonstration or as a welcoming display with quick information. And as they move through the classrooms, teachers can photograph a student’s work on their tablets and display it on the flat panels for all to see, or hand pupils a tablet and let them solve a math problem right on the screen. These “little celebrations,” as Lawrence calls them, have created a more engaging learning environment.

“It allowed technology to really take a step back and not control the classroom,” Lawrence says. “We’re able to step out of the way and let our teachers do what they do, and that’s inspire our students.”

