



Description: Bringing Classrooms into the 21st Century

no.006

Location: Collier County Schools, FL

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2,800 mimio® Interactive Classrooms

Walk into any classroom in Collier County, Florida, and you will find the fruits of their three-year mission to retrofit 2,800 classrooms with the best technology tools available. Each classroom is equipped with a ceiling mounted projector, document camera, audio system, DVD/VCR player, and a portable, affordable mimio® Interactive whiteboard system.

Goals and Challenges

For many of Collier County's students, access to any technology may occur only during the school day. Over 45% of students are classified as economically needy and qualify for free or reduced-cost lunches. Some 44% come from non-English speaking homes and must enroll in the English Language Learners program. Meeting the diverse needs of all students led the district to embrace technology early on, as a way to engage students and motivate them to achieve. Their first step was to bring a WAN and Internet to every classroom. The next logical step was to make classrooms as technology-rich as possible, to bring instruction to a new level with interactive presentation and collaborative learning.

The District Department of Instructional Technology developed and implemented an ambitious project to retrofit all 48 schools in the district with ceiling mounted projectors, document cameras, DVD/VCR players, audio systems, and mimio Interactive whiteboards – all the tools that help bring classrooms alive. Every school already had a few projectors and mimio Interactive systems, and the district curriculum coordinators were seeing the benefits of having this technology in the classroom. But demand for the equipment was so great that it was difficult for teachers to share their limited resources.

The Collier County district purchases equipment for schools annually, based on need and requests. Recognizing the need to bring the latest equipment to all their classrooms, the district took a hard look to determine what the best technology was and how they could pursue the project in the most fiscally responsible way.



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Meeting the Challenge

When it came time for the retrofit, Collier County schools' prior experience with mimio technology, the considerable savings that could be realized over competitive whiteboard solutions, and unfaltering support from mimio convinced the district to specify mimio Interactive systems for the project.

While the project had the enthusiastic support of the school board and the superintendent, the sheer logistics were daunting. The goal was to outfit approximately one third of the classrooms in each school each year, over a three-year period, and to provide support and training for each site as the technology was installed.

At the start of the project, the district placed responsibility for the purchase of these technology tools, their installation, and their implementation in the hands of the Department of Instructional Technology. Centralized purchasing in Collier County ensured that all classrooms in all schools were outfitted with the same technology package. As installations took place, training and support for the teachers were provided simultaneously. And mimio continues to work closely with the district to provide ongoing support and training.

Outcome

The right technology tools can help teachers create classroom environments rich in enhanced content, resulting in a comprehensive and powerful educational experience for their students. Teachers and building level administrators have enthusiastically embraced mimio technology, saying that their students are engaged and responsive to instruction presented through the mimio Interactive whiteboard. That translates to increased interest, learning, and focused participation by students, a lower incidence of behavior issues, and greater teacher satisfaction.

Teacher enthusiasm for mimio technology is also reflected in the numerous requests for advanced training, the frequent inclusion of mimio lessons in lesson plans, and the number of teachers sharing their latest mimio Interactive lessons with their peers. The inclusion of mimio Interactive systems has changed the face of classrooms across Collier County, truly bringing them into the 21st century.