**MONROE SCHOOL DISTRICT, MONROE, WASHINGTON**

# Working With Boxlight, Monroe School District Transforms Its Classrooms Into 21st Century Learning Hubs

With more than 370 instructional spaces to transform, Monroe School District combines Boxlight displays, MimioStudio™ classroom software, document cameras, webcams, PC modules, mounts, and the MimioMobile™ app to engage students and support collaborative learning districtwide.

## School Snapshot

- 10 schools (five elementary, two middle, two alternative, and one high)
- 6,950 students
- 670 employees
- 24% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch

### The Challenge

Using technology and equipment that was anywhere from eight to 12 years old—in a world where anything older than four is considered a dinosaur— Monroe School District was dealing with some major funding challenges when it came to upgrading its educational technology.

"We had all sorts of different equipment across 376 instructional spaces," says Rachelle Butz, executive director of digital learning and infrastructure for the district. "It was problematic from a learning standpoint because teachers won't use technology if they can't trust it to be reliable when they are delivering lessons."

Some of the district's key challenges included unstable Wi-Fi, unreliable equipment, antiquated computer labs, and inconsistent access to technology across both students and instructors. "Instead of working on technology as a daily occurrence in what students did to help demonstrate their evidence of learning, the technology itself was a field trip to the computer lab once a week or twice a month," says Butz. "That's unacceptable in this day and age."

### The Visioning Event

Ready for a transformation that would enhance both the learning and teaching experience, Monroe School District put equipment standardization at the top of its to-do list. "We wanted to be able to guarantee that if a student attended one school and then transferred to another within our district, he or she would have the same access to the same type of technology," says Butz, "and that it was not

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based on where the student lived, or any type of demographic location."

To support that effort, the district held a multiday visioning event centered on developing a mission and vision for the transformation. About 200 community members attended and helped to define the most critical goals for students, teachers, and the district as a whole.

"We boiled it down to three major commitments: powerful instruction, equitable access, and clear expectations," says Butz. "These commitments became the foundation for every board decision. Our district leadership and the school board use these commitments to guide their decisions on all new proposals."

**More Than Just a Demo, Please**
For Monroe School District, equipment selection was the next step. It started with a tech showcase where the district asked various vendors to come in and present their offerings over a four-day period. Each was given a must-have checklist developed by the district. "We didn't want just a demo of the product," Butz explains. "We also wanted to see how a presentation board, webcam, document camera, audio system, and student devices could be seamlessly integrated to provide a very different learning experience for our students."

On the fifth day, the district combined all of the feedback it had received from teachers, students, the vendors, and community members to narrow its choices

down to a handful of viable options. Working with Advanced Classroom Technologies (ACT), the district assembled a technology package that included Boxlight's 75-inch ProColor Series 1 interactive multi-touch flat panel displays complete with MimioStudio classroom

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software, MimioView™ document cameras, webcams, PC modules, mounts, and the MimioMobile app.

The new Boxlight ultra-high definition (UHD) ProColor flat panel displays' Touch 360° interactivity features up to 20 single-touch points or 10 dual-touch for gestures, giving users the ability to easily work together to drive collaborative learning. Each interactive display includes three free device connections to the MimioMobile collaboration and assessment app as well as the award-winning MimioStudio classroom software.

"The most critical elements were the presentation panels, and Boxlight was the product that ACT brought to us," says Butz. At that time, Butz was also introduced to Boxlight's Carol Mazzuca, who "stepped up at every point and met—or surpassed—every ask that we had."

From a seamless integration standpoint, Butz also liked the fact that the MimioStudio software allows for complete integration with other Boxlight products. What's more, MimioStudio easily imports files the district's teachers may have from other whiteboard manufacturers, as well as their previously created PowerPoint, common file format (IWB), and video presentations.

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### Putting the Technology Into Action

As every school district knows, you can have the greatest technology in the world, but if teachers aren't using those tools, then the investment is wasted. Understanding this reality, Monroe School District has put a lot of time and effort into the professional development aspect of its technological transformation. "With our professional development time with teachers being so limited, we have to get

the most bang for our buck," says Butz. "We have to have the greatest leverage that we can in that timeframe."

Butz says Mazzuca and Boxlight helped the district maximize its professional development time while ensuring that both teachers and students fully understood how to use the technology in the classroom. "A lot of times, trainers just come out and you wind up getting more of an in-depth demonstration versus a learning experience," says Butz. "Working with Carol was a game-changer for us."

For example, Boxlight provided an actual learning experience for teachers versus just demonstrating the products. "They provided really deep, rich information in short bits, but then immediately asked teachers to get right to the task to use it and do it themselves," Butz explains. "When teachers walked away from the experience, they could literally walk back into their classrooms and use the technology to deliver lessons."

That acumen transfers directly to Monroe School District's most valuable asset: its young learners, all of whom are now being exposed to a wide variety of technology equipment and software across all 10 of its schools. "It never ceases to amaze me when I walk by a classroom and see our kindergartners talking about their discoveries and using the flat panel displays during the first few weeks of the school year," says Butz.