

NEC Touchscreen Displays Turn Up the Heat on Learning for Florida School District

Facility:

- Duval County Public Schools

Vertical:

- K12 Schools

Location:

- Jacksonville, Fla.

Challenges:

- Modernizing interactive technologies across the 20th largest school district in the nation

Solution:

- NEC 55" V552 and NEC 65" V652 displays with touch overlay

Result:

- Tripled the amount of interactive devices for students to use creating the best possible opportunities for student growth

Date:

- May 2015 to present

As the 20th largest school district in the nation and the sixth largest school district in Florida, Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) has a mission to deliver educational excellence in each classroom and school, every day, to give all its students a chance at success.

In this day and age, it's no longer possible to prepare students for the real world and deliver an excellent education without integrating technology into the classroom. DCPS understood that and had been doing so for several years – but it was time for a change.

The Challenge

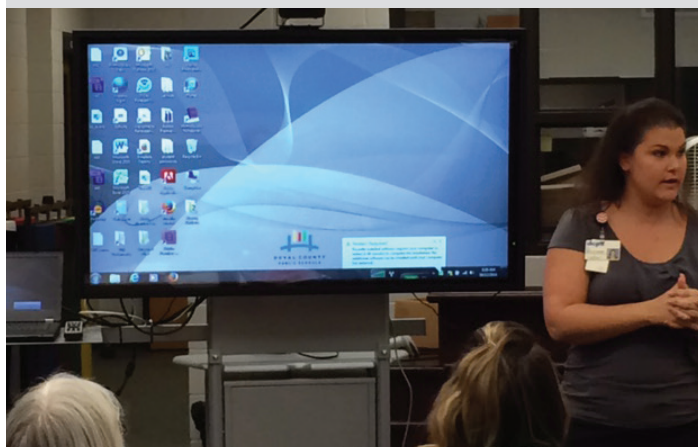
The district had products such as projectors and interactive whiteboards deployed in its classrooms, but there was no real across-the-board standard for the schools' core classroom equipment.

Additionally, the equipment was aging. Projector bulbs were starting to dim and teachers would have to turn off classroom lights to use them, which does not make for an energized learning environment. Some of the interactive whiteboard software was out of date, and not all schools had the funding to upgrade outdated equipment.

Keeping in mind that any solution would be taxpayer funded and therefore needed to be affordable, DCPS's superintendent, Dr. Nikolai Vitti, worked to secure enough funding for new technology that not only could be the standard across all classrooms, but was highly interactive and would create new opportunities for both teachers and students.

"In order to better serve our children's learning needs, it was imperative to make district-wide updates to our classroom technology," Vitti said. "Today's children think and learn through technology, and we needed to provide teachers with the tools to accomplish that. Touchscreens provide a direct interactive connection with our curriculum, and that is important for students to experience."

DCPS leadership asked school administrators and teachers what they were looking for in a touchscreen technology solution to make sure it hit the mark. After a selection process involving four vendors that each submitted a proposal, DCPS chose NEC Display Solutions' V552 and V652 displays with touch overlays, and began deploying them across district classrooms.



The Solution

One of the biggest factors in the district's choosing the V552 and V652 models was that the software inherent to the displays uses native drivers within Windows, eliminating the district's problems with outdated software and the costs of upgrading.

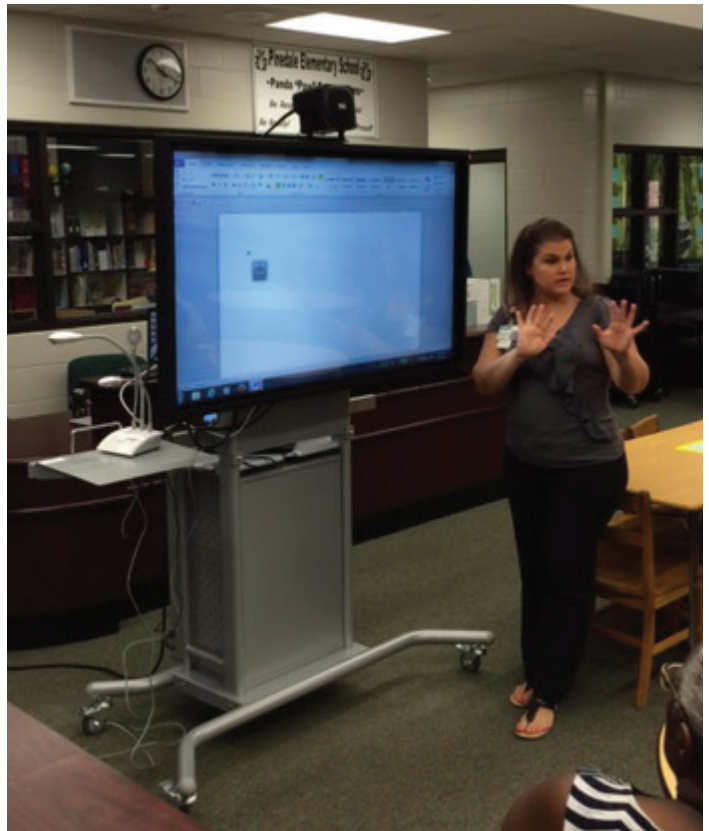
"The fact that we don't need to worry about software anymore is huge," said Jim Culbert, executive director of IT for DCPS technology services. "You just plug it in and forget about it. The plug-and-play functionality is essential."

Another factor was the displays' portability.

DCPS had begun to see success in using the learning center method, which utilizes independent stations within a classroom to facilitate learning. This type of classroom could comprise a group of students in one area of the classroom with laptops and an interactive display, another group with laptops and textbooks, and a smaller group with the teacher for more individualized instruction. Students move around the various stations and are given different ways to engage with teachers and other students to learn material.

"Teaching does not always happen just at the front of the classroom," Culbert said. "We were seeing great success with the blended learning method, especially with middle school students, who tend to be restless, and this method helps keep them interested."

The NEC interactive displays were purchased with media carts as part of a bundle, which allow the displays to move around the classrooms as needed. Previously, the schools had been using interactive whiteboards that were portable, but if the boards were ever bumped or jarred, they would go out of calibration and it would take some time to recalibrate them. The calibration issues were eliminated with the NEC interactive display and cart bundle.



"The monitors were a good way to have one piece of equipment to replace both projectors and interactive whiteboards," Culbert said. "And the resolution is incredible."

The installation began rolling out in March 2015. DCPS now has 2,500 NEC displays across its schools and plan to have an interactive display in all core classrooms in each of its 45 secondary schools for the 2016-2017 school year.

"We've tripled the amount of interactive devices in student hands," Culbert said. "We never would have gotten the funding without the help of Dr. Vitti, and we now have 2,500 interactive displays. That's impressive."

Feedback from students and teachers has been positive, said Katherine Hart, director of technology programs for DCPS.

"Sometimes in the past, by the time we picked something out and got it to the classroom, it was already old, so this time, they were excited to get something so innovative," she added.

Using the interactive displays will help DCPS in its quest to set students up for success by giving them the best possible opportunities and new ways to learn and grow.



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