CASE STUDY

BOXLIGHT

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS, ATLANTA, GA

One School District's 21st Century Classroom Transformation

Huge Georgia school district effectively brings its classrooms into the 21st century by installing Boxlight interactive flat panels, instructional software, document cameras, slates, sound systems, pendant mics, and simultaneous display capability.

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS SNAPSHOT

- 98 Learning sites
- 17 Charter schools
- 55,000 Students
- 75.7% On free or reduced lunch

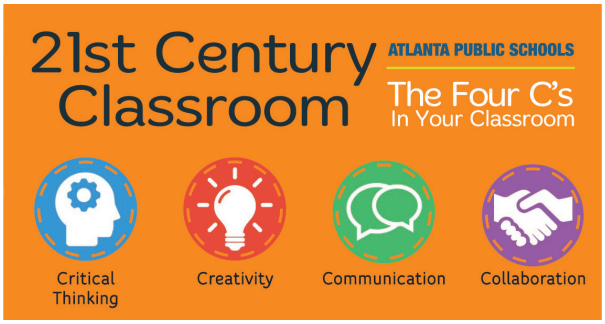
The Challenge

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Making A Difference

For years, Atlanta Public Schools' teachers relied on traditional whiteboards and Promethean boards to lecture classrooms of students. "It wasn't interactive or engaging at all," says Aleigha Henderson-Rosser, Ed. D., executive director instructional technology, "and it was no different than projecting onto a chalkboard."

Most instruction was conducted through lectures—a model that Henderson-Rosser says was very similar to what was used in 1930s-era schoolhouses. "We were using that teaching style to teach 21st century children and hoped that they somehow would 'make the leap,'" she says. "When you're teaching kids that are also using digital 'toys' at home but using a 1930s style to teach them, they don't learn."

One teacher even took a picture from the *Little House on the Prairie* that showed a schoolhouse with a small stove in the corner to prove it. "The only difference was that we're using bigger buildings and rooms," says Henderson-Rosser, "but still the same style."



Finding the Right Solution

Ready for a change, APS began looking for a solution that would bring its classrooms into the 21st century. The Instructional Technology Department worked closely with the IT Department to research best practices and identify the essential components of their desired solution. After months of hard work and an extensive RFP

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process, APS selected Boxlight as their go-to instructional technology partner for all middle and high schools district-wide.

Boxlight's solution stood out on several fronts, not the least of which was the advanced software package that accompanied the Boxlight hardware. "Up until that point in the search process, I think the boards were pretty comparable," says Natasha Rachell, educational technology consultant. "They did just about the same thing; there were a few different things here and there. Boxlight's interactive instructional software was the game changer."

Consequently, the summer of 2015 marked the start of a strategic partnership between APS and Boxlight for a turnkey solution that includes the purchase, installation, service, support, and professional development for all components of the Boxlight Interactive Classroom. The new approach has become the foundation for APS's commitment to helping its students learn, work, and compete in the modern-day digital environment.

Instructional Transformation

As part of its transformation, Atlanta Public Schools incorporated the 4Cs of learning into its core mission. Critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration became the building blocks for instruction. "We've made the 4Cs part of our culture and our language," says Henderson-Rosser, "and we've started integrating it into everything we do."

Communication is an essential component of APS's success. They started by branding the 21st Century Classroom initiative and visiting every school, sharing the vision, distributing posters, modeling the new approach using the Boxlight technology, and installing a panel in every Media Center so all teachers had immediate access to begin exploration and practice.

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>
> **- Natasha Rachell**
> **Educational Technology Consultant**

Using a train-the-trainer approach, Boxlight has provided ongoing training for the district's 16 educational technology specialists (ETS) who are responsible for training teachers on the 4Cs and the new approach to 21st century learning. Technology is a seamless component of the professional development, which begins just prior to equipment implementation. "We did that so teachers would be ready to teach on day one with the new boards in their rooms," says Natasha Rachell, Digital Learning Specialist. Post install, the ETSs continue working with the teachers, modeling lessons, co-teaching classes, as well as providing one-on-one training.

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APS' teachers are now more engaging, interactive, and communicative with their students. Instead of lecturing at the front of the class, they pull the students into their lessons, says Rachell, enhancing the learning experience. "We've empowered teachers and students with the tools and introduced them to the 4Cs," she says, "and all without having to send instructors off to professional development classes."

"When you walk into that environment, there's a huge difference. The content is much richer and more interactive...and the students are highly engaged in their learning."

- Aleigha Henderson-Rosser, Ed. D., Executive Director Instructional Technology

Taking Education to New Heights

To date, APS has installed over 700 Boxlight interactive flat panels. In addition to training the Educational Technology Specialists, Boxlight also provides ongoing onsite professional development to technical support managers and staff including help desk staff and field technicians, who provide technical assistance in the schools.

The close cooperation and collaboration between IT and instructional technology has paid off. APS has not only shed its *Little House on the Prairie* image, but is now well on their way to becoming a 21st century district that actively engages students in real-world learning.

Teachers and students love using the award-winning MimioStudio software to create interactive lessons with embedded assessment, built-in collaboration, and the ability to simultaneously display student work. "When you walk into that environment, there's a huge difference," says Henderson-Rosser. "The content is much richer and more interactive than anything that's being projected using a PowerPoint, and the students are highly engaged in their learning."