# mimio®

## Hempfield Area School District, Westmoreland County, PA

# Meeting School Technology Needs Cost-Effectively with MimioClassroom

Only 30 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, the Hempfield Area School District (HASD) is the largest school district in Westmoreland County, which has a population of over 49,000. The school district is comprised of Hempfield Township and the five boroughs surrounding the city of Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

With a student population of approximately 6,100 K–12 students and a staff of more than 500 administrators and teachers, the school district was searching for a way to streamline teaching and increase participation. Implementing classroom technology seemed to be the key to these goals.

### "The Mimio Program Sold Itself"

According to Dr. Barbara Marin, HASD assistant superintendent, the first year of initial planning included math committee members, the curriculum committee, and the technology department. The planning committee had very specific requirements. Foremost among them: the technology had to be easy to install and maintain.

"Based on my experience, my research, and where we were headed, we invited several vendors to present their products," says Julio Velasquez, HASD director of technology. One of the vendors invited was Mimio.

"After the presentations," Velasquez says, "we surveyed teachers for their input, and Mimio was their top selection. What you get for the dollar makes sense, especially when comparing Mimio solutions with others out there." Marin adds, "We all attended presentations, and Mimio was the one we thought was head and shoulders above the rest."

The school district's integration of MimioClassroom™ products began on a small level and grew from there. "We launched at Stanwood Elementary School," says Marin. "Teachers at the other buildings saw what was happening, and the Mimio program sold itself."

After piloting a program that provided shared Mimio devices to each elementary school, HASD implemented a district-wide installation of Mimio technology in every classroom of every elementary school building in the district.

### A New Way of Teaching— in Every Classroom

Danielle Correll, a kindergarten teacher at Stanwood Elementary, spent a lot of time during her first eight years of teaching going to the teacher supply store to get all sorts of products and supplies to put up in her classroom. With Mimio technology in the classroom, she doesn't buy those things anymore. Now she can make them herself. "I find most of what I need online at mimioconnect.com. And my students don't get tired of the lessons, especially the ones that need repetition, like days of the week and months of the year. They enjoy interacting with the board," says Correll.

> " We launched at Stanwood Elementary School," says Marin. "Teachers at the other buildings saw what was happening, and the Mimio program sold itself."
>
> — Dr. Barbara Marin
> HASD ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Rebecca Crimboli, a second-grade teacher at Stanwood Elementary, can't imagine teaching without Mimio technology. She especially appreciates the MimioVote™ assessment system. "I love the MimioVote," she says. "It helps guide my lessons. After a lesson I know where remediation is needed, and can plan extension lessons. I can make independent assessments for students, too."

Crimboli also uses MimioConnect® lessons, and downloads content packs for her own MimioStudio™ Gallery, including images and sounds. "I can post things and find things there, and meet other teachers for support, as well. If I ask the Mimio Masters for help improving a lesson, it will be bigger and better than the original," she says.

Sarah Butler, a first-grade teacher at West Point Elementary School, uses her MimioTeach™ interactive system daily for attendance, lunch count, and interactive teaching. She is pleased with how it can enhance traditional lessons, as well as those she's designed herself.

"There's a huge difference teaching with Mimio. Before, it was difficult to compete for attention. Mimio has improved class participation, and students are disappointed if I don't use it. I know that technology can be overwhelming, but Mimio has easily enhanced the teaching I already did," says Butler.

Butler also uses the MimioCapture™ ink recording system with regular dry erase markers while teaching her lessons. That way, students who are absent or who need to do additional work can see the lesson at any time.

"Another great feature is the MimioPad™ wireless tablet," says Butler. "I can walk anywhere in the room and change things or teach on the board. I can write, scan over it, and change it to text. That can be your graphic organizer for the next day's lesson. It's like having an extra teacher."

HASD now has Mimio products in all six of its elementary schools—in every classroom. Both existing and new reading and math programs were required to incorporate whiteboard technology, and the technology allowed teachers to go right onto the Internet and get started using Web 2.0 resources. "Mimio has been a natural fit," says Marin.

## Curriculum Drives Policy, Teaching, and Student Technology Needs

Aaron Allen, a fifth-grade math, social studies, and reading teacher, uses Mimio products daily for writing, spelling, and language arts. "With the MimioTeach interactive system and a stylus, I use math manipulatives, and the MimioView™ document camera takes transparencies out of the equation. Kids manipulate objects for concrete references," he says.

Allen notes that the learning environment has quickly become a Web 2.0, game-filled, and engaging one in HASD classrooms. "In its simplest form, [the MimioTeach system is] a quick whiteboard, but it can quickly become something where kids can click, point, manipulate, move, and see their actions," he says.

HASD believes that curriculum needs to drive policy, but it also drives teaching and student technology needs. Velasquez says that HASD teachers are "changing the way they teach, and motivating a digital generation of kids with interactive tools."

"Mimio allowed us to do it in a cost-effective way," says Marin. "If we had gone with another solution, we would have paid two or three times more."

## A Surprisingly Easy Transition

Implementing Mimio technology into HASD classrooms was simple. "Mimio technologies were distributed to all the classrooms, hooked up, and unleashed by teachers and students. Every teacher got their own, and it has exponentially changed the amount of usage," says Marin. "There are no wires or cables to hook up. The MimioTeach and MimioView are now part of the daily classroom routine, from the beginning of the day with attendance, and lunch count. It streamlines many of the procedures teachers are doing."

Teachers also find that having their own technology at hand has made a big difference from technology they used in the past. Beth Biondi, a fifth-grade teacher at Maxwell Elementary School, says, "Having my own [MimioTeach system], all the time, took away all of the hooking up intimidation. Even for a beginner, it was really just like a click of a switch to use it."

> " The great thing about Mimio is that you can save your lessons and then go back to modify [them] later."

— Beth Biondi
FIFTH-GRADE TEACHER AT
MAXWELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Biondi was surprised at how quickly she took to the technology. "I'm not from the generation where teachers were taught how to teach using technology," she says, "so I was very intimidated by it in the classroom. While Mimio and the training were exciting others, I was very apprehensive. I quickly discovered that it was a surprisingly easy transition. It was there, so I started using it, and found that it made things so much easier. Now I don't think that I could teach without it."

Teachers use readily available templates that make it easy to know where the lessons are going. Students know exactly what to do. In math, student leaders take the stylus, lead the class, and feel empowered. Many of the Mimio activities can involve students in facilitating instruction.

"The teachers are so excited about this," says Marin. "A teacher stopped me outside of school to tell me how her students were reading about a hawk living on a New York high-rise ledge, and they were actually able to see the hawk [via] the MimioTeach. What they were reading about came right into the classroom."

To make the transition to classroom technology even faster, HASD is utilizing a unique training system. "We've offered Mimio Masters scholarships to train teachers further. The plan is to have those Masters work with our staff to move further forward by supporting district professional development," says Marin. "The teachers find [the technology] easy to use. I get emails each day where teachers are saying that they can't believe what they are able to do with the Mimio solutions with students. HASD has found that teachers are having success, which encourages them to try new things. And seeing the students responding so positively motivates them to use more technology."

## Cross-Grade-Level Sharing Creates Community and Saves Time

HASD has also found that Mimio technology makes it easier for teachers to share ideas across grade levels, helping to coordinate the teaching of concepts necessary for years to come. "That cross-grade-level sharing has never happened before," says Biondi. Teachers who have become experts in certain areas of Mimio use are also helping colleagues by sharing tips on doing more with the technology.

HASD teachers are developing their own resources and sharing them both locally and online. Teachers have downloaded MimioConnect software onto their laptops so they can work from home or school. They can go online, see what other teachers have done, and they can even search lessons by topic for use in their classes.

"The great thing about Mimio is that you can save your lessons and then go back to modify [them] later," says Biondi. "By creating templates, I can apply lesson design to other subject areas, which saves a lot of time. It's a community creating lessons, which is so much better than doing it all on your own."

## Enhancing Lessons, Improving Participation

The technology is definitely proving to positively affect student participation. "My students now beg to do decimals because of it," says Biondi. "Teachers are inspired to be creative and try it. I think that I was a good teacher before, but Mimio has changed my teaching for the better. Students respond to games and technology. It's a way to reach them. It astounds me what they can do."

Student participation doesn't seem to depend upon age. As a project, Stanwood third-grade teacher Kristy Pollak has students create their own lessons from their reading. They use all the tools, change background and fonts, and add sound clips, too. Stanwood's third-grade team shares lessons in small groups, and the school shares what they've done at faculty meetings.

Shane Welty, a student in Kristy Pollak's class, enjoys getting up from his desk during a lesson. "My favorite thing is Wacky Picture Wednesday, where we make pictures from a squiggly line. Last time, we turned the line into an iguana," says Shane. "My teacher uses the MimioPad from the back of the room. That's pretty helpful, because she doesn't need to be in front with the stylus—and I can see the board. We made a penguin project using letters, art tools, background, and sounds, too. Mimio is cool."

According to Allen, using the MimioTeach system is as easy as using PowerPoint or Word—for both teachers and students. He also notes that, if you want to get more technical, it's not that difficult to create new worlds of learning. "We use the reveal and hide functions to cover outcomes, while still seeing the steps, and then we can reveal the answer to see the outcome—at the right time," says Allen.

Alexa Gray, a kindergartner in Danielle Correll's class, is very specific about the things she enjoys about the MimioTeach system: "I can point to the days of the week and sing the song. I like stations where we do stuff like dot to dot in order." For second grader Margo Warken, clicking on word bubbles with the stylus makes her day. "When you click the bubble, it becomes a word—and you can say it. Sometimes we play games and fill in our vocabulary words in sentences. We don't have to get them all right— sometimes we make mistakes. I know when I'm right. It's fun," she says.

Alicia Gribbon's daughters love the MimioVote system, and enjoy drawing on the interactive whiteboard. "They even enjoy taking tests using Mimio—scrolling back to review questions—and taking their time to complete tasks," says Gribbon. "I'd rather school districts spend money on interactive devices like Mimio than anything else. My kids come home enthusiastic from school. The other day, my daughter came home and drew a picture of the MimioVote she was using."

### "Mimio Gets a Daily Workout Here"

Sometimes it is difficult to implement new technology into an existing system. But Marin says, "Even our most reluctant teachers are using Mimio."

> ## "I'd rather school districts spend money on interactive devices like Mimio than anything else. My kids come home enthusiastic from school."
>
> — Alicia Gribbon
> PARENT

"You never want to purchase shelf technology," says Velasquez. "Mimio gets a daily workout here—it never sits. There is nothing more satisfying than watching students having fun learning, and helping teachers with their lessons. HASD teachers and students have come to rely and depend on Mimio, and additionally, Mimio listens to their ideas and needs for continued teaching excellence."

Velasquez emphasizes the importance of ongoing technological training and teacher collaboration, and notes that Mimio has been attentive to teachers' ideas and needs for continued teaching excellence. "We facilitate the training to make sure the technology is always available, and Mimio has been very supportive with everything from individual teacher help to any technical-side troubleshooting issues," he says. He mentions that a recent technology training survey found that teachers wanted more days to get together to share what they were doing with Mimio technology in their classrooms, and thought it was one of the most valuable in-service days they've ever had.

As far as Hempfield Area School District is concerned, Mimio technology has been a huge success. Marin sums it up this way: "On the opening day of school, I walked down hallways in schools new to Mimio and observed teachers using concept videos and essential questions. Everyone is happy—children, teachers, administrators, and parents."