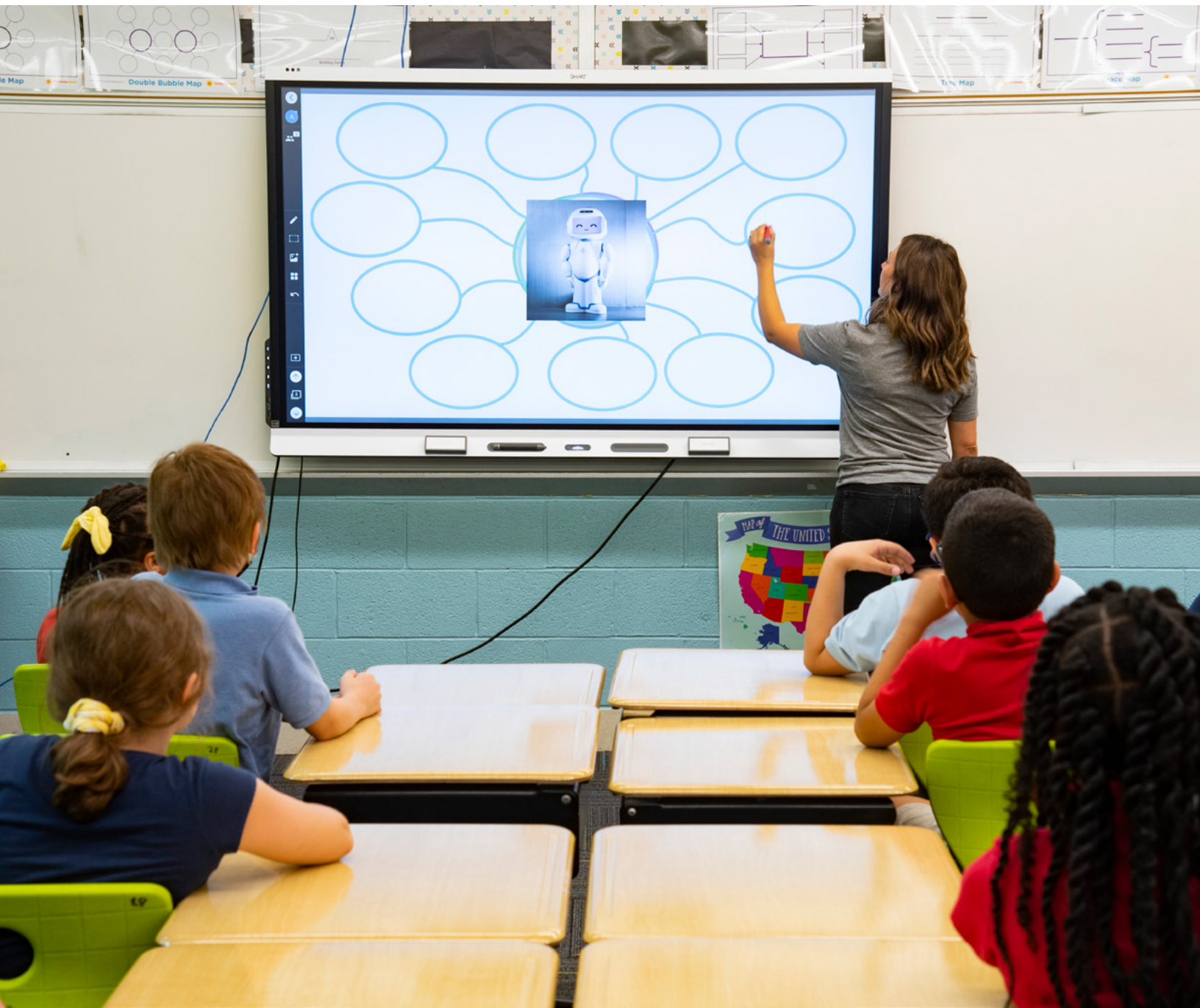




Case Study | Rockford Public Schools

TECHNOLOGY AIMS TO ENGAGE KIDS





ABOUT

As the third-largest district in Illinois, Rockford Public Schools provides instruction to more than 28,000 K-12 students across more than 40 schools in the greater Rockford area. The district is proud of its highly qualified teachers and its 98% graduation rate.

Their mission is to provide a safe teaching and learning environment to ensure their students have the academic and social skills to be successful, lifelong learners in a global society.

CHALLENGE

When a school district wants to provide a rigorous and relevant curriculum, chances are technology is part of the mix. Academic demands, innovative technology and life-relevant skills have demanded a dramatic evolution of the classroom.

The district started its technology transformation by first rolling out student Chromebook devices. The devices were a big hit with students (many of whom didn't otherwise have online access); however, the in-classroom impact of the devices was limited.

There was no way for students and teachers to use the devices for real-time communication and interaction because the devices weren't fostering collaborative learning. Administrators and teachers knew there had to be a better, more flexible way for technology to support the learning environment.



“In many ways, this was a pedagogical investment. We wanted to shift our instruction methods to be more relevant to students.”

Susan Uram
Educational
Technology Director
Rockford Public
Schools



SOLUTION

“Our end goal is to raise student achievement and help kids succeed in learning. We also want to help teachers deliver solid, meaningful learning. So, we started by asking what’s our best path to get there?” said Susan Uram, the Educational Technology Director for Rockford Public Schools.

The district made a significant investment to put more than 1,200 connected SMART interactive flat panel displays in its classrooms. In 2019, they started the rollout in their middle schools. They paused the rollout during COVID to invest in more student devices. In 2021, they moved on to elementary schools. Now, they will implement the final batch of SMART displays in the district’s high schools.

The SMART displays tie into the students’ Chromebooks and allow students to interact with each other and the teacher. This gives students more ways to drive their learning and interact with the teacher’s content – easily adding images, videos, and documents to assignments and handouts.

In the high school implementation, they’re placing interactive flat panel displays on mobile, height-adjustable carts to allow

teachers even more flexibility within the space. In addition, the district added LU Interactive projector systems in some of its gymnasiums to create a more engaging space for a range of student activities.

“The K-12 education market is by far the fastest growing vertical at FORTÉ and I’m blessed and proud to be part of that,” said Tyler Livingston, Senior Account Manager, FORTÉ. “It’s no secret technology is forever changing and evolving for the better. So, the fact that the school districts I work with recognize that they need to be ahead of the curve – and provide their students with the best experience possible – is incredibly rewarding.”





RESULT

The days of podiums and chalkboards at the front of the room and all chairs facing the same direction are changing. Because the SMART interactive flat panel displays serve as their own freestanding computers, it's easier for teachers to create more dynamic and fluid learning formats. For example, they can divide students into subgroups that are connected with each other and the room's display.

This kind of flexibility was game-changing during COVID. When teachers use the SMART interactive displays, it's easy to remotely run a complete lesson plan or class. The entire system is web-based. No more printed handouts. No more packets to send home.

"In many ways, this was a pedagogical investment. We wanted to shift our instruction methods to be more relevant to students. We can't put them into a workforce that is demanding collaborative problem solving and flexible thinking by keeping them in a traditional constrained classroom," said Uram.

EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

- SMART Technologies interactive flat panel displays
- Copernicus iRover carts
- LU Interactive projectors in their gymnasium

