

Easy for Everyone:

Collier County School District finds DyKnow is easy for IT, teachers and students



In 2007, Collier County Public School District embarked on a major construction project – to build six elementary schools to address the growing population needs in Southwest Florida. With new construction came new opportunity; district administrators would be able to decide exactly how to expend funds. With 21st Century teaching and learning philosophies at the forefront of their minds, administrators put technology at the top of the priority list.

District standards called for a student computing ratio of no less than 5-to-1. But ultimately decision-makers at the six elementary schools decided to go above-and-beyond the district standards and deploy a 1-to-1 laptop initiative in grades 2-5. The program put a computer in the hands of every student, allowing them to have 24/7 access to learning.

Tim Ferguson, principal at Veterans Memorial Elementary, one of the six new schools, advocated for a 1-to-1 program because of his belief in technology's integral role in teaching and learning.

"Student learning for the 21st Century has to include the meaningful use of technology," said Ferguson. "As students finish school and become productive adults in the community they will use technology. So the earlier we prepare them, the more successful they will be."

However, administrators and faculty wanted technology to serve not only

as a supplement to curriculum, but also as an instructional tool rather than another distraction in the classroom. The six principals and other district-level technology specialists knew a 1-to-1 initiative would only be successful if the right software accompanied the laptops and desktop PCs.

John Antonacci, technology analyst for the Collier County School District, oversaw research and implementation of the program. While evaluating technology for the new schools, Antonacci probed principals to learn more about teachers' technology needs. He soon learned teachers were enthusiastic about the initiative but concerned about monitoring what students were doing on their computers.

Antonacci had his own concerns about the scalability of available classroom management products.

"[Since we would be supporting six schools] we needed to find a scalable solution that could be managed from the district technology center," said Antonacci. "We came across DyKnow in the research phase and soon realized most competitors weren't able to meet our needs the way DyKnow does; especially since our laptops are wireless. DyKnow allows teachers to monitor student computer use, while we centrally manage the deployment."

Antonacci and his team initially investigated DyKnow for the classroom

About CCSD:

- 50 schools in the district
- 22,000 networked computers in use districtwide
- Nearly 42,000 students districtwide
- 3,000 DyKnow licenses districtwide

Challenge:

Find easy-to-deploy, easy-to-use software while not compromising teaching and learning benefits and technological effectiveness.


DYKNOW[™]
www.DyKnow.com
1.888.8.DYKNOW

management software, DyKnow Monitor®, but soon realized the teaching and learning benefits DyKnow Vision®, interactive education software, presents in and out of class.

The six principals agreed if computers were integrated full-time into learning, teachers would need an instructional tool to help organize class and engage students in collaborative activities via the computer. Ferguson, especially, believed DyKnow would greatly enhance teaching and learning.

“At Veterans Memorial, we believe a lot in cooperative learning and collaboration,” said Ferguson. “We knew DyKnow would help us achieve that.”

After deciding DyKnow Monitor and DyKnow Vision would be part of the 1-to-1 roll out, Antonacci was charged with implementing the software across all six schools.

“We found implementation to be very easy,” said Antonacci. “We already had an active directory infrastructure. Then it was easy-as letting the [DyKnow] software know what active directory we used and immediately all our students were bulk-enrolled into the server.”

Antonacci was able to put 3000 licenses across six schools on one server at the district technology center. Teachers and students then remotely accessed the software through the server from school or home.

“Most other programs require a server for each instance of the software,” said Antonacci. “But the nature of DyKnow’s design allows us to run the software across six schools. And it works inside and outside the district successfully because students successfully access their DyKnow notes from home.”

Soon after implementation, Antonacci and Ferguson observed overwhelming enthusiasm from faculty. Teachers adapted quickly to the software and immediately witnessed great improvements in teaching and learning.

“DyKnow allows teachers to easily manage student computers,” said Ferguson. “When teachers know they have [DyKnow Monitor] supporting them in classroom management, they are free to use the computer as a tool for learning and that makes our program successful.”

Casey Clem, K-5 technology teacher, says, while the most beneficial aspect to teachers is DyKnow Monitor’s classroom management capabilities, the interactive capabilities in DyKnow Vision are beneficial to student learning.

“DyKnow’s Screen Broadcaster and Share Control features are very helpful for the younger kids,” said Clem. “When they see my examples directly on the monitor in front of them it keeps them engaged. I also broadcast students’ screen and have them demonstrate examples in front of the class. That capability is very powerful, effective and fun for the students.” Clem gained new perspective on teaching after implementing the software.

“It gave me a whole new approach to teaching,” said Clem. “I use a variety of techniques for introducing new material to students. For example, if we are learning how to research, I embed links and students click on them to learn about credible Web sites. Or I simply embed the Web page and allow them to browse without even leaving the DyKnow application.”

Clem believes, above all, it’s important to educate students in using computers for learning versus only entertainment.

“We talk a lot about differentiating between computer games and educational games,” said Clem. “We develop exciting educational activities while using technology and this helps them realize that learning can be fun.”

Likewise, Maribeth Richards, 4th and 5th grade teacher at VME, also noticed a heightened level of engagement in her classes.

“In a 50-minute class my students are engaged the entire time,” said Richards.

“Most other software programs would require a server for each instance of the software. But the nature of DyKnow’s design allowed us to run the software across six schools. It worked inside and outside the district successfully because students were able to access their DyKnow notes from home.”

John Antonacci
Technology Analyst
Collier County Public Schools

“One thing you notice in our classrooms is the level of engagement. We don’t have students sitting there not doing anything. Every student is actively participating. It is hard to ignore the impact when you walk in a classroom and see 25 students actively engaged in learning; you know they are learning at a higher level than in traditional classrooms.”

Tim Ferguson
Principal, Veterans Memorial
Elementary School



www.DyKnow.com
1.888.8.DYKNOW

“The reality is, technology is all around now, and students pick up on things really fast. I introduced DyKnow and they just ran with it. They always want to know what else they could do with it.”

Using the Work Groups feature, Richards places students into learning groups and allows them to work together from their own computers. This tool allows her students to build an understanding about a topic collaboratively. She then uses the Participant Status feature to gauge student understanding immediately rather than wait for a test. Richards said logging in to DyKnow is an everyday routine.

“If students’ sign-on to the computer, they have to sign-in to DyKnow,” said Richards.

Richards said the key to successful technology use in her room is DyKnow Monitor.

“[Before DyKnow] I was only one teacher in a classroom with 25 students,” said Richards. “[Now] DyKnow is like the cyber teacher, monitoring students and keeping them on-task; even when I can’t be behind each student seeing how they are using their computer.”

After just one semester of using the software, Clem and Richards agree they could not go back to teaching without it.

“Technology is a wonderful thing and when you lose it you aren’t happy,” said Clem. “When the computer goes down and you have to go back to a paper and pencil you realize how less effective it is. [DyKnow] is definitely not something I would want to lose.”

Ferguson says classroom benefits are exponential for teachers using the new technology. But most importantly, he sees his school as one that is fostering an environment where students enjoy learning.

“One thing you notice in our classrooms is the level of engagement,” said Ferguson. “We don’t have students sitting there not doing anything. Every student is actively participating. It is hard to ignore the impact when you walk in a classroom and see 25 students actively engaged in learning; you know they are learning at a higher level than in traditional classrooms.”

“When we put these resources to work we see teaching and learning from a different perspective,” said Ferguson. “No longer do we have to rely on a text book – that is usually outdated by the time it is published – to get current information. Now students have a tool that opens up the entire world to them instantly.”

About DyKnow

A leader in interactive education, DyKnow combines sound teaching with intuitive technology to create the most flexible and effective solutions for teaching and learning. DyKnow is committed to helping teachers maximize class time and foster collaboration while also minimizing electronic distraction. By promoting effective studying and gathering student feedback teachers can feel confident in students’ academic success.



www.DyKnow.com
1.888.8.DYKNOW