

## Charlotte Dunning Elementary School, Framingham, MA Adding a new dimension of engagement with MimioTeach

“What sets the MimioTeach interactive whiteboard apart from its competitors is two-fold: first, it makes learning much more student-centered, and second, by its very design, it’s giving our teachers a host of engaging features and so many different ways to collaborate with their students as well as their peers. It’s not about replacing the conventional tools my teachers currently use in their daily instruction, but rather adding a new dimension of engagement,” Principal Kim Taylor says.

Charlotte Dunning Elementary School in Framingham, MA enrolls nearly 500 students in kindergarten through grade five. Approximately 22 percent of the students are eligible to receive free and reduced lunch prices. The school also houses the ESL program for all low-incidence languages for the entire district, which number over 30 different languages spoken by the student population.

### Priority One: Adding a visual element to the curriculum

Creating an enhanced learning environment with integrated educational technology was one of the challenges facing Principal Kim Taylor when she took over the administrator role at Charlotte Dunning Elementary School in 2009. “The term integrated technology wasn’t fully being realized at the time. We had computers, projectors, overheads, and even dry whiteboards, but they didn’t work together. It was just a collection of disparate tools – all effective in their own way, but very piecemeal,” says Taylor.

Enter Cheryl Pennie and Jae Goodwin, fourth-grade and fifth-grade teachers at Dunning, who were instrumental in bringing parts of the MimioClassroom™ product suite to the school in 2008. “They saw the tremendous opportunity that the MimioTeach™ interactive whiteboard presented – the next-generation interactive whiteboard solution that would take all of the individual technologies we had and link them into an integrated and collaborative system,” says Taylor.

After her initial observation of the product, Taylor also became excited about its potential for incorporating technology into the teachers’ currently existing curriculum. “I knew it would expand teaching options and answer teachers’ challenges in improving engagement simply and effectively. However, I also knew the best way for the integration to spread was if the staff drove the adoption – a grassroots approach rather than a top-down mandate.”

And it worked. After Goodwin and Pennie began using the MimioTeach interactive whiteboard, other teachers became curious. They asked questions about its ease of use and portability, and wanted to know how Goodwin and Pennie were building, delivering, and managing the interactive lessons using the accompanying MimioStudio™ classroom software. Not surprisingly, Taylor notes, all the teachers were eager to have their own MimioTeach interactive whiteboard in their classroom.

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At the beginning of the implementation, classrooms were outfitted with a MimioTeach interactive whiteboard, along with computers and LCD projectors. Building funds and donations have since been used to acquire additional MimioClassroom components—including extra MimioTeach bars, the MimioView™ document camera, the MimioPad™ wireless pen tablet, and the MimioVote™ assessment – for use in different classrooms at various grade levels.

Taylor believes the real success of the two-year implementation is due to the collaborative approach that the teachers have taken, helping each other to expand their understanding and use of the system. “Efforts like this have the greatest success when they happen teacher-to-teacher,” she says. “The administration was thoroughly supportive of the implementation, but the teachers were driving it. In fact, it took on a life of its own with Goodwin taking the initiative to independently write and present two courses for all Dunning teachers on integrating technology into the classroom – including best practice ideas to support interactive whiteboard technology such as the MimioTeach solution.”

### **Accelerates skill development for both students and teachers**

Dunning educators quickly saw that the MimioClassroom products offered a far better way for students to learn. The system also was clearly changing how the teachers approached their jobs, allowing them to become great facilitators of information, not just sources of repetitive facts.

“Mimio raises the excitement level in both teaching and learning, and helps increase student involvement in class,” says Taylor. “Every teacher that has incorporated the system has become hooked, every single one – even those that never used technology at all.”

Taylor has observed that the learning that takes place in a Mimio-equipped classroom is much more student-centered, and that students more rapidly acquire understanding and mastery in core subjects.

### **Learning forward**

“Our English language learners are responding to the visual aspects of the lessons that are generated in the software,” Taylor continues. “The teachers, as they become more familiar with the ActivityWizard, will be able to create activities, and the software will automatically populate them with built-in content. The activity creator also includes tasks and templates identified by grade or age and subject matter, so our teachers will be able to confidently build age-appropriate activities into their lessons. Clearly, this will give the students what they need to excel.”

In grades 3-5 at Dunning, all the math lessons have been enhanced by greater interactivity. Teachers now use a variety of pictures, built-in tools, multimedia files, and content designed to engage all students, keeping them on task and motivated for improved learning outcomes.

Taylor notes that the enriched learning isn’t limited to the students. “This solution has also created a new professional learning community in our building. Staff visit each other’s classrooms, have conversations about new ideas or how to improve a lesson...it has opened up a whole new level of professional collaboration – an unexpected benefit, for sure,” she said

And while they enjoy the many features of the MimioStudio software and its Gallery full of hundreds of subject-appropriate images, Taylor, Goodwin, and other teachers have big plans for the future use of the technology. “Next school year,” Taylor declares, “the priority will be to search out old curriculum lessons and entire units, and ‘Mimio-ize’ them while developing even more curricula that successfully integrates the MimioTeach with our current textbooks and other teaching tools.”

Now that Dunning teachers have been immersed in “the Mimio solution,” Taylor says there is no turning back. “We are committed to instructional technology integration and looking forward with a renewed passion to directly impacting the academic gains of individual students and entire classrooms as a result of the successful implementation of this remarkable tool.”