

Phoenix Union High School District

Professional Development Support Helps a Large District Utilize Educational Tools

With the move to remote teaching and learning, find out how one district worked with Boxlight-EOS Education to grow skills and expertise with using digital tools

PHOENIX
PXU
UNION

The Challenge

[The Phoenix Union High School District \(PXU\)](#) mission is “Preparing every student for success in college, career, and life.” To ensure focus on this mission, teachers and staff are trained and supported to meet student needs and celebrate accomplishments as they work to prepare and inspire their students. There are challenges including the impact of the pandemic on student learning and teacher practice. [Boxlight-EOS Education](#), the professional development division of Boxlight, has established a strong relationship with PXU (in its ninth year) so when remote learning became necessary, EOS designed training and support to help teachers and staff.

“Going from a traditional, comprehensive campus to a virtual learning experience was one that required both our students and staff to

Snapshot

- 22 schools: 11 comprehensive, 4 specialty, 3 micro-schools, 3 support, 1 digital academy
- 28,000+ students enrolled
- 1440+ teachers and almost 4000 employees
- 9th year of partnership with Boxlight-EOS Education

learn new technologies and strategies to meet the need of teaching and learning,” stated Matthew Georgia, Principal of Cesar Chavez High School. “We had to digitize learning, collaboration, and troubleshoot solutions to keep students engaged in a time of massive societal disconnection.”

Renu Singh, Program Director at Maryvale Gifted and Talented Academy, commented, “The greatest challenge last year was to actively engage all students for 90 minutes of class time in learning. Especially the freshmen whom the teachers had not met before. They were just names in the virtual classroom thus, there was negligible human connection. It was important to keep students engaged in a meaningful way.”

PXU knew that with Boxlight-EOS they would receive training and support to help teachers and staff feel comfortable about utilizing digital tools. Georgia says, “Beyond the professional development and support, EOS provided peace of mind and partnering for ideas we had to better serve our staff and students.”

Key Solutions

The overall EOS approach to their work with PXU in the last year and a half has been:

- Stay focused on immediate needs and avoid overloading teachers and schools.
- Be relevant, meaningful, and adaptable regardless of the learning environment.
- Create balance between district and teacher priorities and needs.
- Help drive positive change including differentiated and personalized instruction.

The EOS program to support PXU was designed to provide ongoing and flexible training opportunities to meet the needs of the teachers, with a commitment to use experiences and expertise to help the district staff reach teaching and learning goals. This support included helping teachers use existing educational technology tools by implementing best practices to enhance student learning. A critical part of educational technology learning was using Microsoft 365 for Education to facilitate instruction in a meaningful way.

Georgia said, “Teachers were incredibly anxious about the transition to remote learning. Their craft and comfort were challenged.” Yet, Georgia could see that EOS support helped boost teacher confidence. He observed -

I noticed that the teachers took advantage of the EOS support to acclimate to remote learning much quicker than those who navigated it independently. Especially teachers that were new to the profession were able to make significant strides in their professional abilities, even though they had limited experience to draw from.

“Teachers are adapting to seamless integration of technology tools and in-person instruction in an efficient way, thus supporting all students who are at various stages of content understanding and social-emotional status.”

- Renu Singh, Program Director
Maryvale Gifted and Talented Academy



Benefits

Boxlight-EOS strives to customize professional learning experiences so that teacher confidence is nurtured without complicating the many responsibilities teachers have. EOS offered training and support in several ways including but not limited to:

- 1:1 and small group support
- Before & After school sessions
- Lunch and Learn sessions
- Lessons with students
- Classroom support
- 70+ custom training topics

In keeping with district health and safety guidelines, virtual coaching was offered that helped teachers with planning and preparation, facilitated and supported learning via teacher cadres, and troubleshooting challenges that may have come up.

As has been mentioned, Boxlight-EOS helped teachers use Microsoft 365 for Education more effectively, such as to make classroom interaction more engaging, conduct large group presentations, and incorporate Teams tools.

“I am looking forward to our staff and students building an even stronger relationship, working together to create incredible learning opportunities in a variety of mediums.”

- Matthew Georgia, Principal
Cesar Chavez High School

Singh stated -

(Maryvale Gifted and Talented Academy) team members have used Microsoft 365 to run their classes since 2017, thus they were eager to know about more tools for remote teaching and learning. Then the teachers utilized those learned skills consistently in their classes. Every member of the GTA team was confident with the support they received during remote learning.

Georgia agreed, saying -

Microsoft Teams has really changed the work of teaching and learning. Teachers are able to provide materials to students who are not able to make it to campus. Teams also provided the most impactful way to connect with students outside of class time to provide support. More than ever before, teachers and students are able to chat about academic and non-academic needs without relying on staying after class or school.

Singh said, “Teachers became experts in using Microsoft 365 tools. From Teams chat to breakout sessions, they quickly created and implemented the learned tools in their classrooms with success.”

Their expertise in using Microsoft 365 tools helped handle other facets of school and district needs. Singh also commented, “EOS support was beyond supporting instruction such as the challenge of online recruitment, data sharing, resource sharing, holding office hours, college and career presentations by outside presenters, and more.”

Georgia stated, “Whenever we thought of something, (EOS) had the technological lens and expertise to help us pull things together.”

For example, when the Gifted and Talented Academy wanted to host an e-gathering to connect with students and families, Krista Walker, Professional Development Program Manager for Boxlight-EOS Education, helped guide Singh to accomplish this task. Singh said, “Ms. Walker walked me through the process and showed the nuances so teachers and students can participate in a meaningful way. The event went smoothly from screen sharing to Q and A session, and more.”

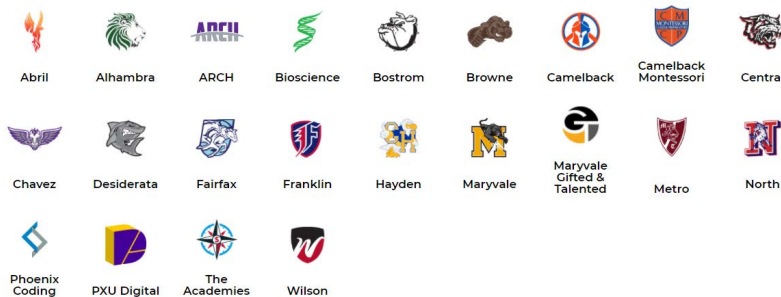
As we approach 18 months of incredible change in education and instructional practice, the PXU teaching and learning community has grown more knowledgeable, proficient, and confident using educational tools and software such as Microsoft 365 for Education.

Georgia enthusiastically declared the positive change that has happened, with the support of Boxlight-EOS Education -

I am incredibly proud of what our teachers have done over the past year and a half. If you would have asked teachers at the beginning of March 2020 if they could believe that we would become a one-to-one device school and that we could provide meaningful learning opportunities to students without them sitting in their classrooms, the answer would have been a resounding ‘No.’ Since then, we have realized our potential to think outside of our own K through 12 learning experience to shape learning for our kids that better meet the needs of an ever-evolving digital world.

We look forward to more stories from Phoenix Union High School District and their positive partnership with [Boxlight-EOS Education](#).

PORTFOLIO OF HIGH SCHOOLS



“(Boxlight-EOS Education is) an amazing team that has supported us in the effective integration of technology instruction, PLC, and presentations. The EOS team provides solutions for every question we ask. Thank you!”

- Renu Singh

Educators from Phoenix Union High School District answer the question, *“What is the benefit of having Boxlight-EOS Education technology-related professional development available for you?”*

Benefits of having technology related professional development allow me to learn new and existing platforms along with the features they offer. Technology changes so fast and when you finally get the hang of a platform, updates come along with new features. Professional development has allowed me to learn more about platforms such as Teams, Forms, and OneNote which I was able to deploy within my classroom and provide students varied levels and options of activities for continuous learning.

- John-Martin Rigsby
Trevor Browne

I appreciate having technology-related professional development available to me because it helps me refresh my skills. Over the course of my educational journey, I have acquired and developed many technology skills and advanced them based upon current needs and trends. Most of this I have had to do on my own, spending many hours online researching new and existing knowledge bases. Doing so has made me dangerous in some respects because it has given me enough tools to cause problems without being able to fix them until I research them after they occur. Having professional development has allowed me to refresh many of my skills and spend my external research time further evolving and acquiring more advanced tools and knowledge.

- Tom Larsen
Phoenix Digital Academy

For me it was critical. I made a change in profession, and this was my first-year teaching. I was a college basketball coach for 33 years and needed this support in order to teach in today’s world. Technology is so important with today’s students, helping them to learn and focus. I would never have been able to have success in my classroom if it were not for the professional development that was available to me. I would go to every session and learn as much as I could. I attended so many and then would make an assessment if it would be beneficial for my class. Everything I learned was pretty much from the ground up and I was so impressed with the patience and the knowledge the staff had. I would have never been able to make it this first year without the professional development available.

- Joseph Esposito
Cesar Chavez