

NEW BEGINNING AT BARTOW COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM WITH EPSON BRIGHTLINK INTERACTIVE PROJECTORS

SCHOOL PROFILE

NAME:
Bartow County School System

LOCATION:
Cartersville, GA

TYPE:
Public

ENROLLMENT:
Approximately 14,000

WEB SITE:
www.bartow.k12.ga.us



Projected image simulated

When the Bartow County School System, located in the rural foothills of Georgia's Appalachian Mountains, began rebuilding the 58-year-old Adairsville Middle School, no one knew that a powerful tornado was about to devastate the small community. After the enormous funnel cloud flattened hundreds of homes and businesses, there was little that Adairsville and its surroundings could do but pick up the pieces.

When the doors of Adairsville Middle School opened eight months later on August 7, 2013, it was a healing moment for the community. "The new facility is also another big step forward in the Bartow County School System's overall plan to engage all 14,000-plus students throughout the district in learning through the use of interactive technology," said Mark Bagnell, director of technology of the Bartow County School System.

To begin Adairsville Middle School's new era in collaborative learning, 720 students and 55 teachers and staff walked into a building twice the size of the old one, with each of the 65 brand new classrooms equipped with an Epson BrightLink® 475Wi interactive projector, an ultra short-throw projector + pen combination, as well as a laptop and access to ebooks for every student.

Based 45 miles northwest of Atlanta in Cartersville, the Bartow County School System is the state's 25th largest school district, with 12 elementary schools, four middle schools,

and three high schools; it also offers pre-K and transitional academy opportunities. To improve overall achievement levels, the district is replacing and upgrading many of its schools, providing a positive, interactive learning environment for its more than 14,000 students.

MANAGING GROWTH

In an increasingly interactive world, the challenge is for district technology directors like Bagnell to manage its growth throughout the school system. “My goal has been to go beyond relying on only hardware-based projector classroom solutions,” he said.

“When interactive projector technology like BrightLink arrived on the scene, I saw it as a great opportunity for the Bartow County School System to add and upgrade interactive classrooms at a lesser cost.”

Bartow currently has 300 BrightLink interactive projectors throughout the district with plans to add 120 more this year. For the first time, teachers are able to use a high-performance, ultra short-throw projector with built-in interactivity and pen combination without the constraints or expense of interactive whiteboards.

“The BrightLink saves us money because we can use the whiteboards that we already have—or make a wall, dry-erase board, or table into an interactive learning area,” said Bagnell. With the ultra short-throw BrightLink mounted over a 16-foot whiteboard, it is no longer necessary to break into classroom ceilings to install and maintain projectors.

SAME CURRICULUM SOFTWARE

Choosing BrightLink also allowed the district to expand its previous investment in Promethean’s ActivInspire™ teaching and learning software. “Epson’s partnership with Promethean to sell ActivInspire to BrightLink users was huge for us; it not only helped us maintain compliance with licensing, but saved money as well,” Bagnell said. “The prospect of using the software already integrated into our existing system solidified my decision to install BrightLink to address both interactivity and projection.”

As more new schools open, Bartow educators have an easy way to continue using the same curriculum software in new interactive classrooms. Since so many teachers already use the Promethean software, it dramatically cut down on training time. “Our teachers were eager to start using BrightLink in their classrooms, so we didn’t skip a beat,” he said.

OPENING NEW DOORS

“With our new classrooms and broad media distribution system, the projector has become an integral part of collaborative learning in our classrooms,” said Bagnell. Using BrightLink, teachers can access many types of content, including presentation slides, web pages, educational software, flip charts, ebooks, videos, or an image or textbook page scanned on the classroom document scanner. They can easily transition from a video clip to an image and back to the lesson for a more flexible learning environment.

“Teachers give interactive pens to the students, who can go right up to the board and start writing.”

– Mark Bagnell

Director of technology of the Bartow County School System



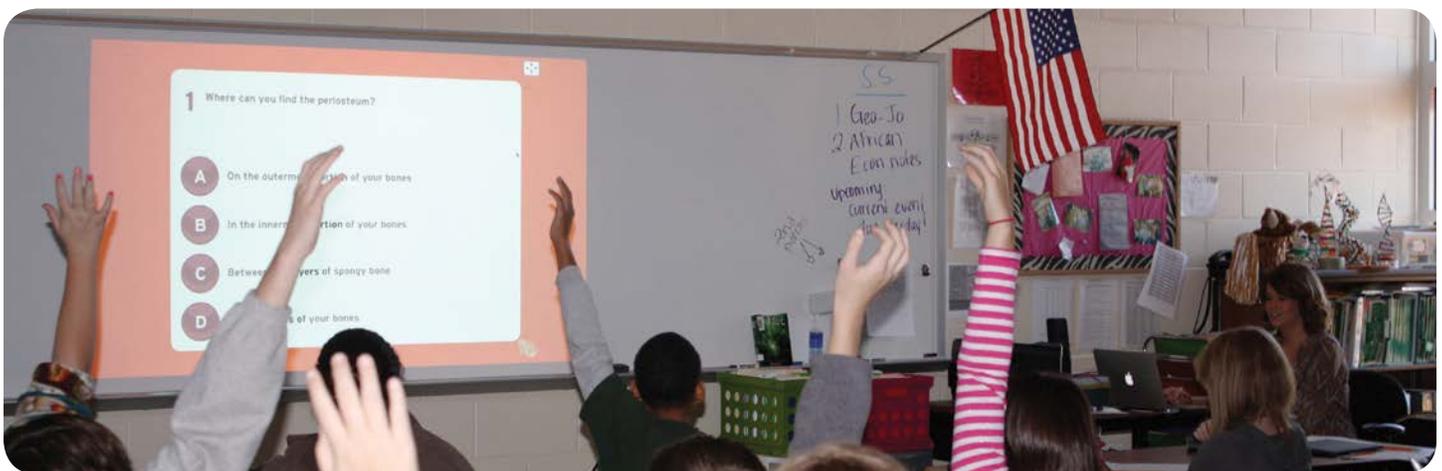
“Teachers give interactive pens to the students, who can go right up to the board and start writing,” said Bagnell. With dual pen support, two users can write at the same time, either directly on projected images sent over the network or on content from DVD/Blu-ray® players or document cameras. BrightLink includes digital, HDMI audio and video connection, for HD quality displays. Classrooms can also use the Epson iProjection™ app to project documents and photos from mobile devices.

Teachers are able to project large, interactive WXGA images up to 100 inches without shadow interference. With 2,600 lumens of color brightness and 2,600 lumens of white brightness,¹ the BrightLink 475Wi uses 3LCD, 3-chip technology for brilliant, true-to-life color images. Epson 3LCD projectors have three times brighter colors than leading competitive projectors.²

WORK IN PROGRESS

As with all districts, classroom technology at Bartow is a work in progress, and funding technology in a poor rural school district is an ongoing effort. With about 10,000 laptops already in the district, Bartow is moving toward a 1:1 laptop initiative for its 14,000-plus students. The district is also making significant upgrades to its wireless infrastructure and implementing a learning management system. The media distribution system is now in place, a portal to digital content for classroom instruction. “It also allows us to manage the projectors from anywhere, make sure they are turned off, and keep up with lamp life and maintenance schedules,” Bagnell said.

Like all the district’s rebuilt and upgraded schools, Adairsville Middle School will go through a learning curve with its new technology. “But at the end of the day, we have to understand that what we do to set up interactive classroom technology like BrightLink matters,” said Bagnell. “We’re working to change the way instruction happens in our schools, to get kids engaged in learning, to give them the tools to truly take ownership of their education and cross that graduation stage.”



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¹ Color brightness (color light output) and white brightness (white light output) will vary depending on usage conditions. Color light output measured in accordance with IDMS 15.4; white light output measured in accordance with ISO 21118.

² Compared to leading 1-chip DLP business and education projectors based on NPD data, July 2011 through June 2012. Color brightness (color light output) measured in accordance with IDMS 15.4. Color brightness will vary depending on usage conditions.