

Mountain View-Los Altos Creates an Engaging Learning Environment with Classroom Audio

FIRST-HAND CLASSROOM INSIGHTS

As a former teacher, Robert Fishtrom understands the need for classroom audio.

Now the Director of Information Technology for Mountain View-Los Altos Union High School District in California, Robert started his career in the classroom. His passion for technology and seeing how it affects students inspired him to earn his Masters of Education with an emphasis in instructional technology.

“All educators, including myself, want to create the best learning environment, and I’ve found that classroom audio is part of that solution,” said Robert. “Students learn when they can hear, and when they can’t, they get frustrated and disengage.”

“Lightspeed provides that peace of mind because no matter the type of classroom, they’ll help create the best learning environment.”

*Robert Fishtrom
Director of Information Technology,
Mountain View-Los Altos Union High
School District*

THE CRITICAL NEED

Researching what instructional audio technology was currently in place in their classrooms, Robert learned that teachers used a variety of different products. Some were even cobbling together solutions because they were unhappy with the current amplified systems that blasted sound at students sitting closest, while those in the back still couldn’t hear.

“No one liked how the speakers pushed out sound, and the ones that came closest to what we wanted had complicated installation processes and user

controls,” said Robert. “Even with all those different systems, none of them were able to project the teachers’ voices, which was another need.”

When an MVLA hearing deficit teacher had a class with three students who also had hearing deficits, Robert knew that this would be a great opportunity to show how Lightspeed’s classroom audio systems could make a difference.

“The teacher didn’t believe me when I said this system would evenly distribute the audio for everything he was streaming on his computer, and it would also distribute his voice with a simple lanyard microphone. But he started using it, and he was so excited that all his students could hear him because it had never been *that* easy before,” said Robert.

Robert wanted to incorporate Lightspeed’s Topcats into his schools to help keep teachers from straining their voices as they tried to make themselves heard in all corners of the room - which Robert remembered all too well from his teaching days.

“My throat would feel that pain of projecting all the time! And once my MVLA teacher realized he could talk at a normal volume and still have everyone hear him, he was amazed,” said Robert. “Word got around, and then others started reaching out to me, asking me to put Topcats in their rooms too. I had another teacher tell me, ‘The sound system you have given me has made me excited about teaching again. I thought I was at the end of my career.’ You can’t ask for a better outcome than that.”



SCHOOL
MOUNTAIN VIEW-LOS ALTOS UNION
HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

LOCATION
MOUNTAIN VIEW, LOS ALTOS, AND
LOS ALTOS HILLS, CALIFORNIA

INDUSTRY
EDUCATION

THE CHALLENGE
Teachers struggled to find an easy-to-use audio system to evenly distribute their voices and multimedia activities throughout the classroom. The district also wanted a solution that would meet their evolving education needs.

LIGHTSPEED SOLUTION
Topcat



BENEFITS
All students, no matter where they are in the classroom, can hear their teachers.

Teachers can use a natural voice and reduce vocal strain.

Easy set-up and use allow teachers to focus on their students and lessons.

Flexible configuration options meet changing education needs.

A TRUE PLUG AND PLAY SOLUTION

Technology directors know their teachers don't have time to figure out complicated equipment controls or have much availability to attend extensive user trainings. When school leadership brings in new tools to a classroom, they need to be reliable, easy to install, and simple to use.

"With Lightspeed, everything is just so simple. The installations are quick; they don't have to connect to a network for updates; they work with just about every other multi-media tool we use; and they don't require long trainings to understand how to use it," said Robert. "Schools don't have to worry about being blindsided by extra expenses or resource drains. The money they'll spend will be for quality equipment that lasts."

Knowing that their classroom audio systems can be used almost immediately out of the box helps the teachers of MVLA spend more time focused on their students and not on their equipment.

MEETING FUTURE REQUIREMENTS AND NEEDS

Another critical consideration for Robert and other technology directors is finding classroom audio systems that will meet the changing needs of their schools.

"You're always going to need sound in a classroom," said Robert. "That's never going to change, but what will change is classroom setups. At MVLA, we're incorporating more STEAM elements into our curriculum, so along with adding labs, our classrooms are getting bigger. We need to ensure that students will be able to hear in such a large environment."

Being able to use multiple Topcat speakers to cover the newly enlarged spaces without requiring teachers to make changes to their microphones has helped ensure that instructional audio technology issues don't impede new learning techniques at MVLA.

"Finding technology that is 'future-proof' is a significant consideration for us," said Robert. "We need to know that it will meet our needs today and in the years to come. Lightspeed provides that peace of mind because no matter the type of classroom, they'll help create *the best learning environment*."



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