

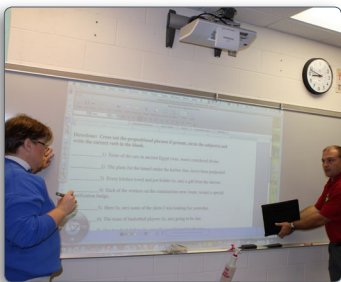


CHIEF PROVIDES FLEXIBLE, ENGAGING CLASSROOM SOLUTION

AFTER YEARS OF SEARCHING, GRETNA PUBLIC SCHOOLS FINDS THE PERFECT SOLUTION FOR ITS CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY NEEDS: CHIEF INTERACTIVE.



The staff at Gretna Public Schools, a fast-growing school district just outside Omaha, Neb., had no doubt that interactive technology was needed in their classrooms. The big question, however, was which interactive solution best fit their needs? They didn't want to purchase technology just for technology's sake and find out that it wasn't being used. The product had to be simple to install and easy to learn. It also had to integrate seamlessly into existing classroom spaces and work with multiple software programs.



"About four years ago, we started looking. We knew we wanted to move in the direction of some sort of interactive board but were not sold on the solid board, so we looked for other options," said Jerome Skrdla, technology/computer coordinator for the district. "People were getting impatient, but we said we just didn't have a solution that we think is there yet."



To explore all the available options, Skrdla worked with Engaging Technologies, a local company focused on providing classroom technologies to involve, engage and motivate students.



In the summer of 2011, Dustin Frank, owner of Engaging Technologies, heard about a new interactive technology from Chief. Frank's representative at Chief, Seth Baker, had told him about Chief Interactive, a brand new product that integrated interactive technology into the company's award-winning Short Throw Projector Mount series. The solution could project onto any surface, was compatible

with any projector, and worked with other technologies.

Frank called Baker to tell him about Gretna's situation.

"We had a sample within 48 hours. I took it down to the school, installed it on the wall and they fell in love with it," said Frank. "It was the one solution that put it all together and gave them the flexibility they knew they wanted."

Chief Interactive Mounts integrate eBeam™ Technology from Luidia, Inc., and through the use of an interactive stylus, users can present, annotate and interact with projected content. The solution offers interactive education software for Mac or PC.

Gretna put in an initial order, and Engaging Technologies got to work installing Chief Interactive in a number of classrooms across the district's high school, middle school and three elementary schools.

Simple Installation, Seamless Integration

Each space varied greatly – classrooms in a recently constructed school, classrooms in the oldest school in the district, a high school media center, portable teaching spaces – yet Engaging Technologies was able to integrate Chief Interactive everywhere it was needed.

"Installing the product was extremely easy, especially with the help of Engaging



Technologies. It worked with every room we have, from the high school all the way down to the elementary," Skrdla said. "You can put it at whatever height level you need and project. We felt good about the decision we had made because it just adapted to whatever we had."

Gretna was also pleased with the look of the product. "It's really a nice looking set-up. I think it adds aesthetically to the classroom," Skrdla added.



Initially, staff members were concerned about having to learn a whole new technology, especially when the school year was right around the corner or had already started. As soon as Chief Interactive arrived, however, they became acclimated in no time.

"My biggest concern was the amount of the new technology in the building," said Travis Lightle, principal at Grenta Elementary School. "We're always spread thin, just like every district. I was worried that I would do nothing but troubleshoot for the teachers, but I haven't spent even an hour on it. All I hear is how easy it is to use."



Over at Thomas Elementary, the teachers who received Chief Interactive also adapted quickly.

"You have to be hands-on and give it a try, and once you do that, you can explore beyond what you thought," said Catrina Ellis, a second grade teacher. "It's so easy to use, and you can do so much with it."

Enhanced Student Engagement

Ellis and her colleague Andy Boone, a first grade teacher, are amazed at how Chief Interactive captures the students' attention – and keeps it.

Boone uses the interactive board everyday, for all his subjects, including literacy centers, vocabulary instruction, math and unit studies.

"For some kids, phonics can be boring, but now we can take those types of activities and make them interactive for kids to enjoy and have fun with," he said. "We switch centers every single day, and a group of kids is always wondering, 'When do I get to use the interactive board?' It's great that kids are so excited about learning. And they picked it up so quickly."

Students at the high school level are equally engaged.

"This is an experience that kind of got lost for a generation," says Jeff Haun, an English teacher at Gretna High School. "Before, the teacher dominated all the instruction. Now the kids are once again coming up to the board to participate, and they're excited about it. As a teacher, I know that means they're paying attention."

As an added bonus, teachers have the ability to save the interactive lessons for future use. "It's a good tool for review. I use it to review what we did the day before so we can see our growth," Ellis said.

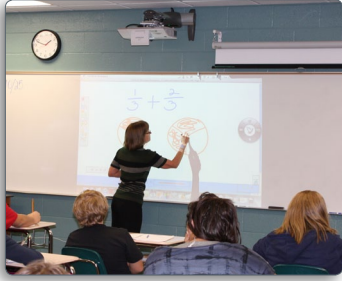
Making Classrooms More Efficient

The addition of Chief Interactive is making an impact in ways teachers never expected. Many schools are seeing increased collaboration among teachers. For example, at Gretna Elementary School, each first grade teacher makes lesson plans for one specific subject and saves the materials to the server for other teachers to use with their Chief Interactive Mount.

Teachers are also thrilled with how much easier – and quicker – it is to set up their projector for a lesson.

Jennifer Jones, a first grade teacher at Gretna Elementary, explains, "Last year I had a projector but it was on a cart, so it was a matter of pulling it out, plugging it in and making sure the kids didn't walk in





the way, and after all that, it only filled a small area. Now it's so convenient – I just hit the one button, and it fills the entire screen so the kids clear to the back can see everything."

In the beginning, some teachers were apprehensive about the Interactive Stylus. Would it be difficult to write with?



Not so, according to Haun. "I've tried several of the interactive boards and pens and projectors, and what I like about Chief Interactive, first of all, is the pen. Many of them are big and heavier and not conducive to normal writing. I like Chief's," he said.



The district is also pleased with how well Chief Interactive works with other software programs and technologies. At the elementary level, many teachers use it in conjunction with interactive clickers and electronic tablets, creating a dynamic, engaging experience for students. Chief Interactive also works seamlessly with a variety of education software solutions.



"The transition time from going between the Scrapbook and back and forth between documents is quick, so there's not that latency period that I've seen with some of the other projectors," said Haun.

A Solution for the Future

Based on these experiences, Gretna just placed an order for additional Chief Interactive Mounts. It's a decision that makes sense for many reasons, including budget. Because Chief Interactive works with any projector and integrates seamlessly with other technologies, they know they found a solution that won't need to be replaced anytime soon.

"One of the things we didn't want was to remount another board. Now you have the new board and the old board, and we're really not sure how long that technology will be in place. With the technology from Chief, I can see going 8-10 years or longer, so that really gave us confidence in that area," Skrdla said.

After visiting schools and seeing how much both teachers and students enjoy using Chief Interactive, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Richard Beran is satisfied with the decision.

"I told them all, 'Buy what you want – but you better be using it.' And they have," he said. "It has been great. The biggest thing now is that they want more of it, which is a reflection that it's a good product. Other teachers see it and want it in their classrooms, too."

For Skrdla, he is confident his patience paid off.

"My wife always says I'm very conservative about making big purchases. I look and look and look, but when I see something that's right, I just know," said Skrdla. "So when I first saw the Chief Interactive, I knew it was the right solution to go with."

Over at Engaging Technologies, the team is certain they've found an interactive solution schools can count on.

"Our philosophy has always been that we don't sell a million things, but what we do sell, we believe in and trust," Frank said. "We couldn't be happier with Chief Interactive."

CHIEF ■ A DIVISION OF MILESTONE AV TECHNOLOGIES ■ www.chiefmfg.com

USA ■ P 800.582.6480 / +1.952.894.6280 ■ F 877.894.6918 / +1.952.894.6918 ■ chief@chiefmfg.com

Canada ■ P 877.345.4329 ■ F 888.377.5314 ■ info@chiefmounts.ca

EMEA ■ P +31 (0) 495 580 852 ■ F +31 (0) 495 580 845 ■ europe.chief@milestone.com

Asia Pacific ■ P +852 2145 4099 ■ F +852 2145 4477 ■ asia.chief@milestone.com

