

Extron's PoleVault Successfully Integrates Technology Into The Curriculum



Central Middle School — Columbus, Indiana

Central Middle School in Columbus, Indiana was designed to provide a 21st century learning environment for students. One of two middle schools in the Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation, or BCSC, the new campus opened its doors for the first time in the fall of 2007, welcoming over 800 students and 85 staff members. Before construction began, Mike Jamerson, BCSC Director of Technology, considered the challenges of providing classroom technology that was easy to use and could be supported by his small staff. The school installed 46 Extron PoleVault Systems at the new campus, and response from teachers, students, and administrators has been overwhelmingly positive.

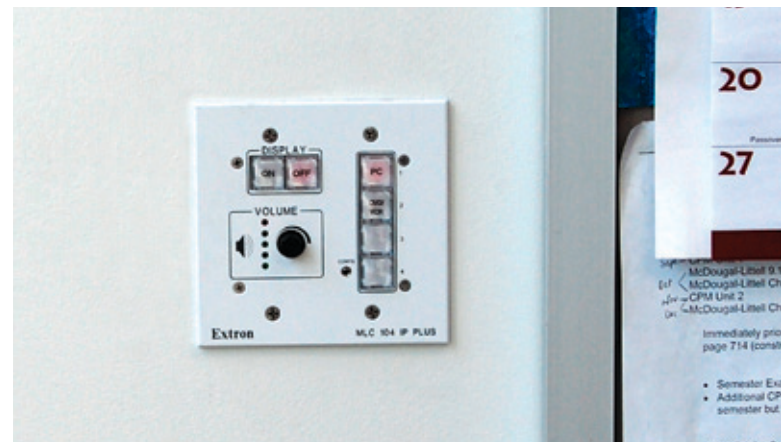
Looking for the Right Technology Integration Solution

The city of Columbus in southeastern Indiana has a rich history and is well known for its architecture. The community held strong and deep emotional ties to the old five-building Central Middle School campus. Many were sad to see it go, but administrators looked forward to creating a modern learning environment for future generations. The newest version of Central Middle School gave designers a chance to select the right hardware and software to make the integration of classroom technology and the Internet a reality for both students and teachers.

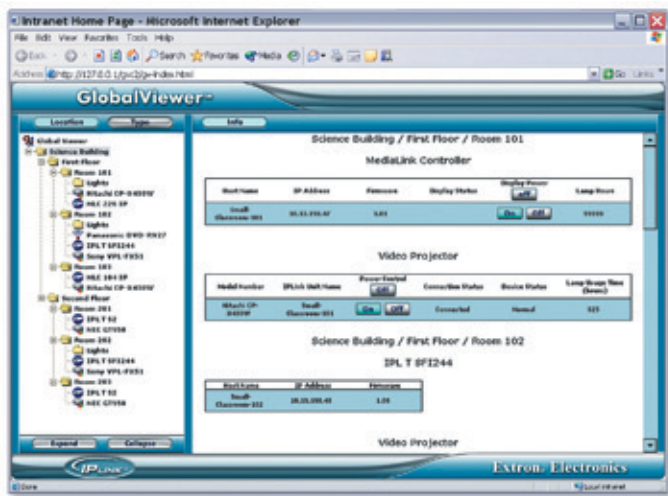
Classroom A/V technology at the old school was difficult to use and in-room connectivity consisted of little more than a power outlet. "We had to check out A/V equipment from the library on

the day we needed it and it wasn't always available," says Debbie Gaff, 7th & 8th grade science teacher. "Even when we could get it, it was very cumbersome to set up and use." Some of the older classrooms included a computer with an Internet connection, but it wasn't easy to share images or information with students. "I used to gather the students around my computer monitor," said Karla Eudy, 7th grade social studies teacher.

The responsibility for selecting the right classroom technology system for the new campus fell to Mike Jamerson, BCSC Director



The push buttons and volume control on the PoleVault System controller make classroom technology easy to use.



The free GlobalViewer® software allows A/V system management and remote tech support over an IP network.

of Technology. “Over the last few years, many schools have installed ceiling mounted projectors, but that only solves part of the problem,” Jamerson says. “We wanted a complete system that was easy to use and would allow us to monitor usage and save energy, and that could be supported with a small staff.”

Enter Dale Gayman, President of CIM Audio Visual, a Columbus, Indiana A/V system integrator. Dale had recently learned about Extron PoleVault Systems. “We met with Andrew Edwards and the Extron Education Team in early 2007,” Gayman says. “We wholeheartedly agreed with their vision of how classrooms should operate and I recommended that Mike Jamerson consider installing PoleVault at Central Middle School.”

An Integral Part of Instruction

Administrators and teachers alike are emphatic that PoleVault Systems are much more than an enhancement to the classroom. Making classroom technology easy to use has had a dramatic impact on instructional planning, everyday teaching, and student achievement.

The PoleVault ceiling mount simplifies installation and keeps equipment safe.



“Teaching with the PoleVault System has been a wonderful experience. We all know that students are visual learners, and with this technology, students are able to hear and see very clearly when I am introducing a new concept or trying to enrich an activity,” says John Bagan, 7th & 8th grade language arts teacher. “My students are much more focused and much more on-task in terms of what’s going on in the classroom.”

“As a social studies teacher, the Internet gives me access to current events information and, thanks to the PoleVault System, I can easily display it on the screen for everyone to see” says Eudy. “Using classroom technology is now a part of my every day in one form or another.”

“I use it a lot for modeling instruction, so if I want the students to learn to do something in a spreadsheet, such as collect some data and create a graph, I can project what I’m doing with my computer on the screen and students can follow along on their laptops at their desk,” Gaff says. “It also enables us to provide a multiple format delivery system for our children. We can teach to all learning styles much easier now.”

Gaff also reports that having access to the classroom technology has helped her to involve parents in what their children are doing. “Throughout the year, I use a digital camera to take pictures of my students in action, particularly when we’re doing lab work,” she says. “I was able to put those pictures in a slideshow and project it on the screen at the Parent-Teacher Conference. Parents were thrilled to see pictures of their children at work in the classroom.”

Randy Gratz, Central Middle School Principal, notes some surprising statistics that he links directly to the new PoleVault Systems. “Taking a look at our end of semester assessments, it’s clear that students are more engaged and even attendance is up compared to the last year at the old school,” he says. “I think that has a lot to do with how our teachers are using the classroom technology. It’s across the board, too. Even teachers with 30 or more years of experience have embraced the technology with impressive results.”

A “First-Class” Installation

With more than 171,000 square feet of space on two levels, the new Central Middle School campus features 56 miles of computer cable strung throughout the school. Each classroom is equipped with a ceiling-mounted LCD projector, screen, speakers, a PC with Internet connectivity, and a DVD/VCR, which also serves as the cable TV receiver. It’s all mounted, connected, and controlled through a two-input PoleVault System.

PoleVault Systems are also used in the band and choir rooms, and in a large, multi-purpose auditorium/theater that school officials refer to as “the gray box.” There, a three-input PoleVault System is used to integrate a 5,000 lumen projector with two computers and a DVD/VCR.



Forty six classrooms at Central Middle School offer the PoleVault System.

"We used Extron's online PoleVault System Configurator for every system," Gayman says. "It's a great tool for configuring and ordering." He went on to praise PoleVault Systems for their ingenuity: "Every one of our 20-plus installation team members raves about the forethought that went into the design. We expect these systems to be the core of the classroom for years to come. While the source equipment, projectors, and screens may change, PoleVault Systems allow schools to easily update their technology any time."

According to Mike Jamerson, "CIM Audio Visual did a marvelous job. This is a first-class installation. They were able to customize the installation of the PoleVault control panel for the science laboratory desk and did a particularly good job making the system work for our band and choir rooms, which have 16 foot ceilings."



Installation of the system controller was customized for each classroom, such as the science laboratory desk shown here. The controller can also be mounted on a wall or lectern.

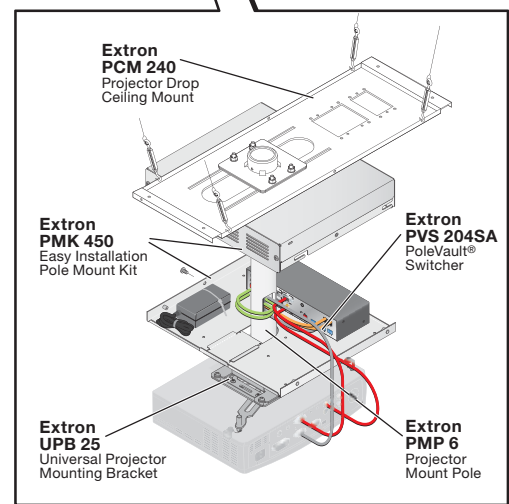
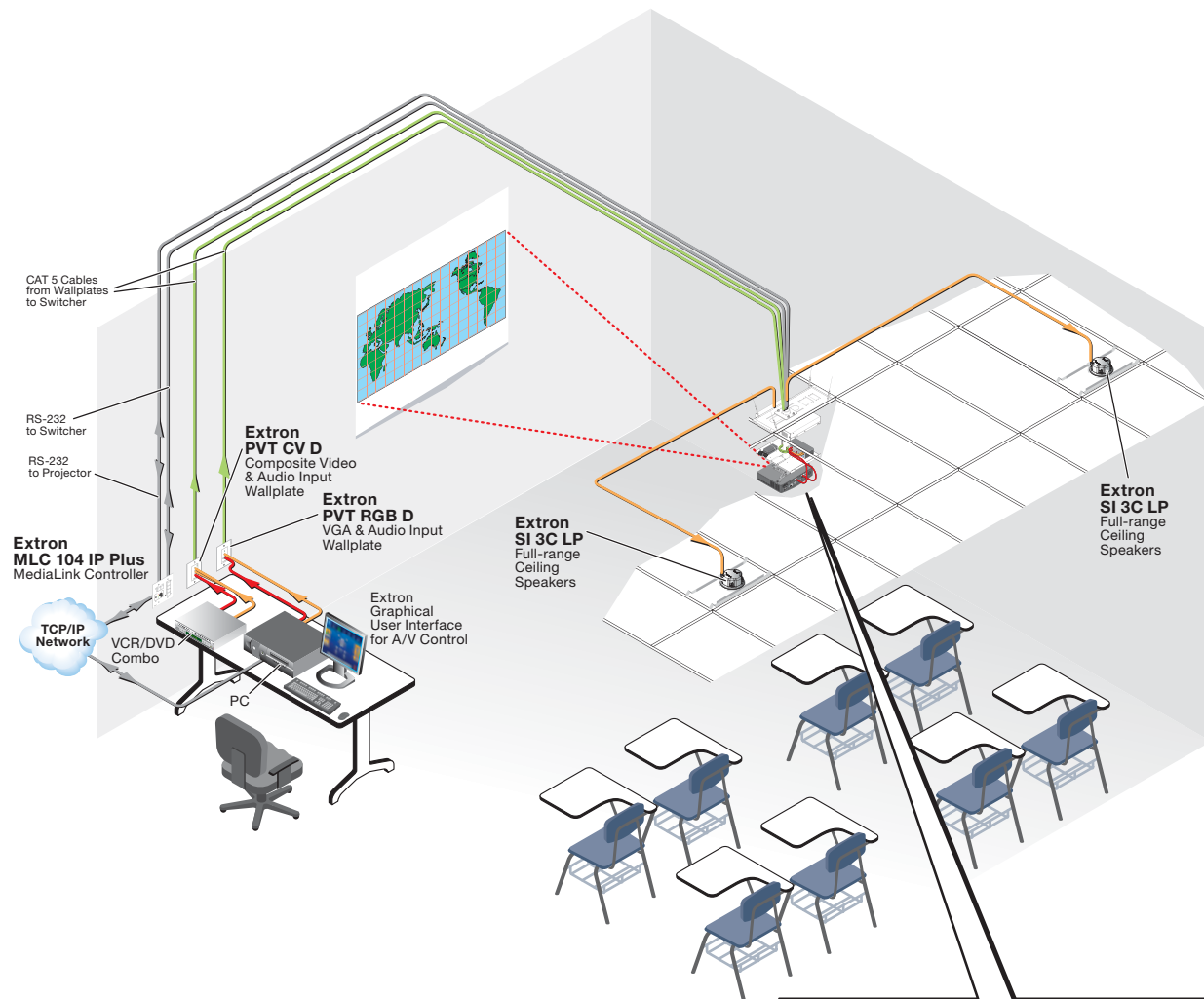
Conclusion

Ease of installation, ease of use, and a design that allows for the integration of projectors and source equipment from any manufacturer, gave decision makers confidence that PoleVault Systems would meet or exceed the requirements for classroom technology at the new Central Middle School campus. After just a few months of putting them to use, administrators, teachers, and students alike agree that PoleVault Systems have made technology an irreplaceable part of life in the classroom. So much so that PoleVault Systems are being retrofitted into existing classrooms at another Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation school.



PVS 300 - Three Input System

PoleVault™ System Diagram



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