



Painted Hills Middle School Creates a Unique Collaborative Learning Environment with Extron Classroom AV Systems

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William Carr
PSUSD Director of Educational Technology
and Information Systems

The newly constructed Painted Hills Middle School in Desert Hot Springs, California is the first middle school to be built in the Palm Springs Unified School District in 17 years, so the District wanted to ensure that construction, including the school's AV system, was perfectly executed.

PSUSD chose Extron Electronics' PoleVault® and WallVault® classroom AV systems and hired a local AV integrator to perform the installation. William Carr, PSUSD Director of Educational Technology and Information Systems, explains that Extron was chosen because “Extron equipment is durable, simple to use, reliable, and professional.” Carr was familiar with Extron because the company had earlier granted the district a PoleVault system so that administrators and teachers could experience the benefits firsthand. According to Carr, “All were impressed with the quality of the design and installation. There was very little cutting of the walls and little or no modification to the T-Bar ceiling.”

Client Needs

The district wanted to install easy-to-use AV systems in 34 regular classrooms, 9 science classrooms, the band room, choir room, drama room, library, gym, computer lab, and a conference room. “We wanted to create a truly unique learning environment,” Carr explains, “including a collaborative pod seating arrangement, interactive technologies and advanced audiovisual capabilities.”

Carr adds that an engaging environment with clear communication is particularly important at Painted Hills because it is “a high tech school serving a high population of English Learning students.” The PoleVault and WallVault systems facilitate multi-modal teaching methods, allowing teachers to easily



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Collaborative Classroom Environment with PoleVault System

operate audio and video equipment within the classroom. The decision to use PoleVault and WallVault reflected PSUSD's desire "to integrate the key modes of learning with technology into each classroom. The visual, audio, and interactive components of the PoleVault and WallVault systems were the key."

PoleVault

The Extron PoleVault AV switching and control system for ceiling mounted projectors was chosen for the general and science classrooms as well as the band, choir, drama, and conference rooms.

PoleVault securely mounts and conceals the switcher and integrated audio amplifier above the projector. Having the projector and AV components mounted to the ceiling discourages theft and tampering.

WallVault

The WallVault system was chosen by PSUSD for the Painted Hills gym, library, and computer lab, for structural reasons. According to Carr, "The WallVault was the perfect solution due to the unique architectural design of those rooms. The WallVault securely houses the Extron equipment and removes the large footprint of having the equipment placed on shelves or in a cabinet."

Both PoleVault and WallVault work with Extron patented Flat Field® speakers, creating consistent sound levels throughout the classroom.

VoiceLift®

Extron's VoiceLift microphone was included with both PoleVault and WallVault systems to help evenly distribute the teacher's voice

throughout the room. Studies show that significant gains in student achievement and teacher effectiveness can be made by simply ensuring that the teacher can be heard. "The VoiceLift system fills the classroom with the teacher's voice," remarks Carr. In addition, teachers are able to spend the day speaking at a natural level, which significantly reduces voice strain and vocal fatigue.

Results

"Using Extron Classroom AV systems, we were able to install a simple-to-use, push button control panel at the teachers' fingertips," expressed Carr, "This centralized panel allows the teacher to turn on the projector, switch between their laptop, document camera and desktop computer, plus adjust audio volume."

By choosing Extron systems for the installation, PSUSD was able to meet all their needs at Painted Hills Middle School. As Carr explains, "There are no bad seats in our classrooms; each student can see the projected image and hear the teacher clearly."

Carr noted that installation of the Extron equipment went smoothly. He added that the systems rank high in value and states "with Extron's education discount pricing, the systems were within the PSUSD budget."

Overall, Carr and the District were pleased with the project. The PoleVault and WallVault systems are "easy to use, high tech, and engaging," Carr says. "The system is interactive, and allows the use of additional AV equipment such as Mobi Interwrite pads, iPads, document cameras and video microscopes. It's fun and exciting. Each classroom can project an impressive 72" image, which is amazing for delivering video and educational content."



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