

K-12 School District Improves Information Sharing with Vibrant Digital Signage

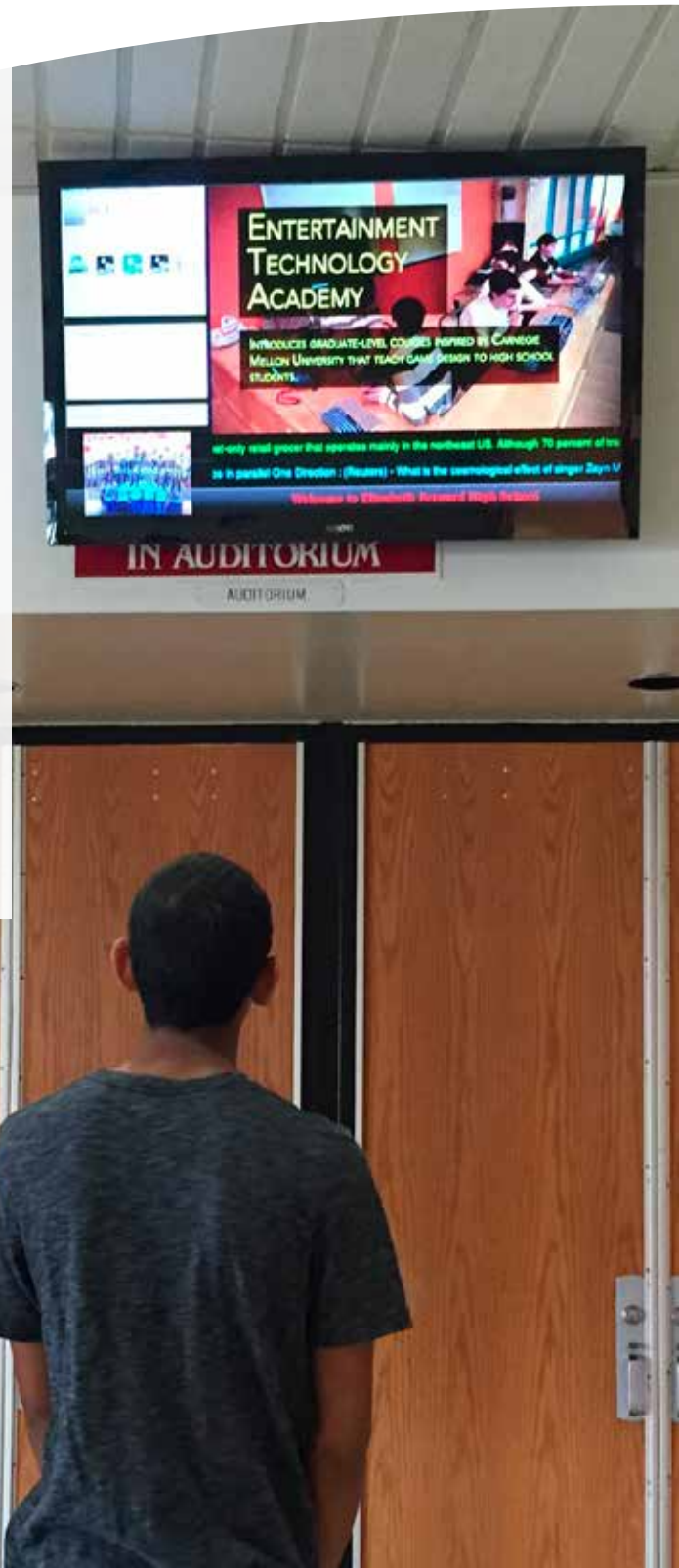
Industry: K-12 Education

Challenge

Elizabeth Forward School District specializes in transforming education and creating student-centered learning initiatives that infuse technology with creativity. It's located approximately 35 minutes south of Pittsburgh and operates six schools.

The District needed a solution to showcase their students' high-quality projects and to present relevant, real-time information about current events, school events, and life-after-graduation statistics. The solution also had to do so in a dynamic and eye-catching way.

The District was unsure of the best way to display their students' work and key information. It had implemented large LCD TVs connected to laptops, which ran either slideshows or movies. However, the District wanted something that would give it more control over the design as well as the ability to push the content to multiple endpoints. Digital signage emerged as the best option.





"I would highly recommend Black Box to any K-12 or higher education institution as a vendor that really understands its clients' needs and project requirements."

Mary Beth Wiseman, Director of Technology at
Elizabeth Forward School District

Solution

The District's IT department met with several vendors to discuss digital signage options. It was important for the District to see a demo, ask questions, and to brainstorm ideas with the vendors. The District's Director of Technology, Mary Beth Wiseman noted that vendor knowledge and creativity played a large part in the decision making.

Black Box held brainstorming sessions with the District's IT staff and provided input in the design of vibrant, information-filled templates that are used throughout the schools.

When the District decided to stream live announcements over the digital signage displays, it had to find a solution that was economic, but reliable. Black Box aided in researching what product would satisfy their needs and budget. The District chose the Black Box iCOMPEL S Series digital signage publisher and players. According to Wiseman, Black Box was a good match for the level of excellence and quality that Elizabeth Forward has come to demand.

Wiseman stated, "We chose Black Box because the [iCOMPEL] software was very customizable yet remained user-friendly. The staff members at Black Box were extremely knowledgeable and offered creative ideas for inclusion in our solution."

Results

The digital signage solution fit seamlessly into the school's overall infrastructure. Wiseman noted that the publisher and players plug directly into the schools' LAN and work seamlessly with its network. The District's biggest challenge was that it was using Apple computers for all aspects of implementation and content creation. Black Box worked closely with the District to make sure they didn't experience any compatibility issues.

The digital signage solution was implemented over a six-month period. Wiseman said this timeframe was decided on because the District wanted to ensure that everyone involved was well prepared for the content updates. First, the District implemented three digital signage displays in various locations throughout Elizabeth Forward Middle School. Next, they added four digital signage displays to Elizabeth Forward High School. Then, the District's largest elementary building was implemented. The remaining three elementary schools are in the process of implementing the final displays.

Wiseman spoke of the project's success stating, "We wanted our signage to encourage students to do their best and to aim high in planning their goals. We wanted to keep people informed of events and we also wanted to showcase student work. By having a means to showcase the good work that we do, our students and community have taken great pride in our school district."

She added, "Our district strives to keep the communication lines open with our community. This is one more way that we can do that."

The District received feedback from students, staff, and parents. The overall feedback was that the digital signage, which showcases students' projects and presents relevant information, has made them feel proud to live in Elizabeth Forward and to attend their schools. Staff members and parents can now physically see the students' results of their projects, which allows them to communicate what takes place at school and how the District is raising the bar for their students and children.

Wiseman stated that the project's success was visible, "When students and parents walked in our buildings and saw the wonderful things that are going on in our District and how much we encourage our students to make good decisions and to strive to be the best that they can be."