

# A school that piloted the Flexcat to save teachers' voices discovered its most powerful effect was personalizing small-group instruction

## EASING VOCAL STRAIN

The classrooms and even hallways of Emerson Elementary School in the small town of Emerson, Georgia, are often crowded with students working in small groups. While you may not see a teacher, you can be assured that one is listening in, monitoring the students in each group, and available to answer questions with just the touch of a button.

Since the start of the 2014-2015 school year, all of Emerson Elementary's fifth-grade teachers have been using the interactive Flexcat® audio system. This innovative system facilitates two-way communication, dynamic redirection, and monitoring and assessment of small learning groups. But that isn't why Dr. John Harper, the superintendent of Bartow County Schools, launched a Flexcat pilot with three fifth-grade teachers at Emerson Elementary.

***“The sound amplification has been great for our teachers. But pretty quickly they discovered that the biggest benefit of Flexcat is with small group learning. Wherever kids are around the building working in their small groups, the teachers can listen in on their conversations.”***

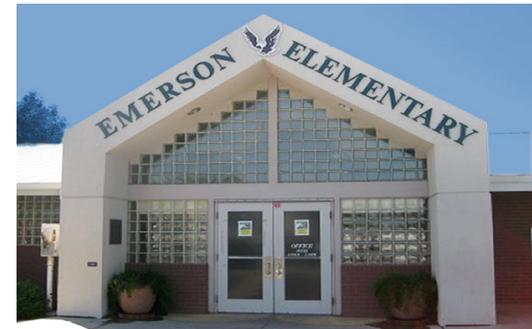
*Robb Kittle,  
Emerson Elementary Principal*

The original aim of the pilot was to reduce the teachers' vocal cord strain. According to Robb Kittle, the principal of Emerson Elementary, “The Flexcats have made a huge difference. Every year for the 13 years of her career, one of our teachers has gotten laryngitis at the start of the school year. This year, she didn't.” With the Flexcat, teachers wear a pendant microphone around their necks so they can move easily around the classroom. They speak at a normal volume and wherever they are, students can hear their teacher loud and clear.

## ONE TEACHER, MANY GROUPS, COMPLETE CONTROL

Teachers at Emerson Elementary are committed to the power of differentiated, interactive, small-group instruction, but monitoring and supporting many groups of students can be a challenge for a single teacher.

During small-group activities, each group of students has a Flexcat speaker pod that connects them to the teacher. With the press of a button, students can get their teacher's attention to ask questions or report their



## EMERSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EMERSON, GA

### CHALLENGE

**Reducing teachers' vocal strain and allowing teachers to interact with multiple groups during small-group instruction.**

### LIGHTSPEED SOLUTION

**Flexcat** Small Group Collaboration



### RESULTS

- With Flexcat, a teacher who had gotten laryngitis at the beginning of every school year of her 13-year career was able to talk normally and not lose her voice
- Teachers can listen to and speak to multiple small groups, no matter where the students or teachers are in the building
- Students can get help from their teacher without having to leave their group or disrupt other groups
- Teachers are more in control of their classrooms because they can hear all of the small groups talking without having to be next to them
- Differentiated instruction and collaborative learning have skyrocketed

## CASE STUDY

progress. While students are working, teachers can hear everything that's going on from anywhere in the room and can use the microphone to provide answers or get a group back on track.

*“With the Flexcat, our teachers can really extend themselves. They can be in many places at one time.”*

*Robb Kittle*

### EXPANDING ACCESS TO FLEXCATS AND LEARNING

Kittle believes that the fifth-grade pilot of the Flexcat system has been hugely successful. “Our teachers are healthier because they’re not having to shout to be heard, and our ability to provide effective, differentiated instruction and collaborative learning has skyrocketed.” In the future, Kittle would like to see Flexcat systems in all of his school’s classrooms so that every student and teacher can have the benefit of hearing better and learning better.



*“It’s great that students can get help from their teacher without having to leave their group or disrupt other groups. And teachers are much more in control since they can hear each of the groups talking without having to be right there.”*

*Robb Kittle*