

High-poverty district ensures each student gets the best seat in the classroom

Santa Ana Unified School District adopts classroom audio systems to manage PBL and give students equal opportunity to hear the teacher

Santa Ana Unified School District (SAUSD) has made a commitment to providing a personalized learning pathway for each of its students. As the sixth-largest school district in California with more than 58,000 students, this is no small undertaking, especially given that Santa Ana is located in one of the poorest zip codes in the United States. According to the district’s Deputy Superintendent of Educational Services, Dr. David Haglund, “We serve a large and diverse student population. We see high levels of transiency, health issues that stem from poverty, and students in real need of personalized attention and support.” While the district is using many strategies to help its students thrive, they’ve found that audio tools can have a significant impact.

“It just makes sense that when students can hear clearly they’re going to learn better,” shared Dr. Haglund. Given the district’s poverty rates, many students do not get regular medical care, which means that hearing impairments often go undiagnosed and untreated. That’s why the district has installed Lightspeed amplification systems in over 500 classrooms. The amplification systems ensure that every student, even those with auditory challenges, have a front row seat. The systems also help teachers address full classes clearly and intelligibly without straining their voices.

“When a teacher steps into a small group, the whole dynamic shifts. Students immediately look to the teacher for answers. Technology like Flexcat enables teachers to monitor what’s going on in small groups without disrupting students or interfering in their self-directed learning.”

*Dr. David Haglund,
SAUSD’s Deputy Superintendent of
Educational Services*

TEACHERS STEP OUT OF THE SPOTLIGHT BUT NOT OUT OF THE PICTURE

Project-based learning is being widely used across the district as an effective way for students to learn at their own pace while gaining deeper mastery and understanding of the concepts they’re studying. In a project-based learning model, teachers are there to facilitate learning but they’re not center stage. The students drive their learning, often working in small groups to collaborate and problem-solve. As teachers across the district implement project-based learning, many are also piloting Lightspeed’s Flexcat audio pods.

Using Flexcat, teachers can listen to any small group without the students knowing. Teachers hear exactly what’s going on from across the room. If students are struggling or getting off track, the teacher can step in, but if all is going well, then the group work can continue uninterrupted.



SANTA ANA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, SANTA ANA, CA

CHALLENGE

Given the district’s poverty rates, many students do not get regular medical care, which means hearing impairments often go undiagnosed and untreated.

LIGHTSPEED SOLUTION

Topcat, Flexcat



RESULTS

- Every student, including those with auditory challenges, can hear the teacher
- Teachers can address full classes clearly and intelligibly without straining their voices
- Teachers are able to monitor what’s going on in small groups without disrupting students
- Teachers can more easily regain students’ attention
- Students are empowered to be independent learners

Project-based learning is not a quiet activity, so in classrooms where Lightspeed amplification systems are being used, teachers can more easily regain students' attention when it's time to wrap up their small-group work.

“Teachers gain unprecedented insight into student problem-solving and collaboration, without having to sneak up on groups and hope they go unnoticed. We encourage students to express themselves vocally, but that means the volume in a classroom can really rise fast. The amplification systems help teachers communicate with students and manage their classrooms.”

Dr. David Haglund

they're quick to embrace it,” said Dr. Haglund. “That has held true for the Flexcats. As more and more teachers embrace project-based learning, more and more teachers are requesting Flexcats.”

REACHING EVERY STUDENT IS ESSENTIAL TO PERSONALIZED LEARNING

SAUSD students are empowered to be independent learners. The district is leveraging the power of technology to help provide every student with a personalized learning path.

TEACHERS ARE ON THEIR OWN PERSONAL LEARNING JOURNEYS

Personalized learning extends not only to students in SAUSD, but also teachers. According to Dr. Haglund, “Teachers are moving at their own pace to implement new learning models and technologies. The district provides professional development that pinpoints their individual learning needs. This targeted activity is the essential core of personalized learning. We have clearly outlined for teachers what the expected outcomes are. We provide them with training, support, and resources. Then, we step back and let teachers do the great work we know they're capable of. We're modeling how we want students to learn. We're empowering teachers so that they in turn can empower their students.”

As part of this modeling approach, SAUSD uses Flexcats in their staff meetings from time to time so that principals can see how they're used. Principals can then model the technology for their staff. “Once teachers see how something can be used and its benefit,



“Lightspeed audio tools are becoming an essential component of providing students with the support they need to meet their learning objectives. The systems are helping both teachers and students achieve success.”

Dr. David Haglund