

STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM HANDS-ON LEARNING WITH INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY



**Waterloo Catholic
District School Board**



DISTRICT PROFILE

NAME:

THE WATERLOO
CATHOLIC DISTRICT
SCHOOL BOARD
(WCDSB)

LOCATION:

WATERLOO, ONTARIO
CANADA

STUDENTS:

MORE THAN 40,000
ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY,
AND CONTINUING
EDUCATION STUDENTS

WEBSITE:

www.wcdsb.ca

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When we use it
in class I have
lots of fun and learn
cool things.”*

– Peter, grade 3



The Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) operates 52 schools and five adult education facilities serving more than 40,000 elementary, secondary and continuing education students in the Waterloo Region. It's always a challenge keeping up with the demand for the latest technology that benefits students in the classroom. Most students today have access to computers or smart phones which are inherently interactive devices. Students engage readily with technology in the classroom because they are comfortable with and enjoy interactive technology.

The WCDSB investigated a wide range of technology options that would help students learn in the interactive environment to which they're accustomed. Given the limited budgets for school boards, investing in the right technology is more important than ever. The WCDSB wanted to get the most adaptable technology for its budget. They acquired EPSON BrightLink 455Wi interactive projectors to install across their school board because they offer great advantages to teachers and students. This high-performance, ultra short throw projector + pen combination integrates interactive functionality in one machine, without the constraints or expense of an interactive whiteboard. You can turn any desk or wall into an interactive area that helps engage large or small groups of students with these devices.

Cost efficient

Sandra Quehl, CIO for the WCDSB states, “From the first time I saw the EPSON BrightLink 455Wi interactive projector I knew it would benefit our schools. Previously, you needed a projector and a whiteboard to create an interactive learning environment. That's not the case with this projector.”

Ms. Quehl notes that they've had interactive whiteboards installed in the past but the EPSON BrightLink is the most cost efficient and cost effective technology that meets the WCDSB's needs. They began installing these projectors in select schools in June 2011 and



hope to have every classroom in the WCDSB equipped with them by June 2012. In the classrooms that already have the projectors, Ms. Quehl sees teachers and students collaborate more on lessons. Her impression is that students benefit from the increased interactivity. They've integrated the Ontario curriculum with the projector using the RM Easiteach software provided.

BrightLink interactive projectors engage a classroom

The RM Easiteach was incorporated into the Ontario curriculum through the development of lessons and resources created by teachers. This was facilitated by classroom teachers, board level consultants and teams of individuals who were responsible for making the links between Ontario curriculum and interactive learning. The

lessons that they have developed with the software are based on the pedagogy of student directed learning, and they are using the BrightLink projector as a learning tool and learning centre for students.

One example of greater student engagement and interactive learning provided by the BrightLink platform that Ms. Quehl references occurred in a math class; a lesson called for students to roll a die 20 times and to calculate the probability of it rolling the same number twice. The BrightLink is used in this case to show a large calculator to the entire class so that all students can participate in the lesson. This successfully engages the entire classroom and allows all students to feel like they're contributing to the exercise.

Another example Ms. Quehl cites is one involving gifted students in grade 7 and 8 classes; they were tasked with developing story boards on what they would teach their fellow students if they had the opportunity. This project involved developing a teaching plan, mapping it out visually and then presenting it to the classroom. "The EPSON BrightLink is perfect for this student project because it gives students a chance to get creative and incorporate videos and images into their presentations," states Ms. Quehl.

“I love BrightLink. When we use it in class I have lots of fun and learn cool things.” – Peter, grade 3

**“When our teacher uses the BrightLink to teach us stuff, I understand things easier and think it makes learning fun.”
– Kayla, grade 7**

Ms. Quehl notes that students have reacted very positively to the BrightLink projectors within their classroom. It has provided teachers with the ability to integrate audio, video clips, internet sites and other resources within their programs. She also notes that the BrightLink has provided teachers with the ability to use interactive learning websites as well as RM Easiteach lessons to engage students with their learning. "There has been a transition from teacher directed learning toward student directed learning and students are excited about using the BrightLink on a daily basis." She's happy with the board's decision to purchase the BrightLink for every classroom and believes the benefit to students is significant.

