



Dynabook Laptops Meet the Complexity of Hybrid Teaching at Brooks Academies

Business Environment Challenges

Brooks Academies of Texas is part of the Somerset Inc. network of high performing public charter schools with four campuses specializing in science and engineering, language, college prep and the arts. In 2020, its teachers and paraprofessionals had to swiftly adopt virtual teaching techniques, but their laptops could not keep up with the demands of remote learning and hybrid instruction. Amid a pandemic, a laptop might seem trivial; but for teachers, it was the primary tool to communicate with students. And when it failed, teachers were frustrated and disheartened.

Running on an old Windows 7 operating system, 50 gigabyte hard drive and i3 processor, laptops would freeze up when hosting a Zoom meeting with multiple Google Chrome tabs open at once. Also, teachers could not screen share, assign breakout rooms or record class sessions. Even though they were equipped with popular brand-name laptops for schools, about 25 percent of the teachers opted to use a personal laptop, tablet, or smartphone to multitask. However, the biggest complaint was the inability to see students on the small laptop screens, and as a result class participation dropped because students did not feel acknowledged. This was especially critical for special needs students.

The laptops were nearing the end of a five-year lifecycle with a refresh scheduled for the following school year, but the current conditions made it a priority.

Technology Solutions

Brooks Academies was in search of a better solution to place into the teachers' hands before the end of the school year. "We were at a breaking point in this challenging year. I received many emails and calls from teachers. They were just exhausted, and their personal devices were now breaking because of overuse," said Austin Morgenroth, IT director at Brooks Academies. Sharp provided two Dynabook laptop demo units and were put to the test by teachers who are power users. Austin added, "Ultimately, the high-performance laptops, competitive pricing and the trusted, consultative relationship with the Sharp team helped to justify the purchase."

The school purchased 150 Dynabook laptops. The laptop refresh includes asset tagging and custom-built devices with specifications to meet its educators' needs. Dynabook laptops also come with the latest Windows 10 Pro operating system, Windows Hello for facial recognition, a 14" diagonal wide touchscreen, Bluetooth® technology, a 256GB SSD hard drive and so much more. For worry-free protection, laptops are backed by a four-year Dynabook +CareSM Service warranty that includes on-site service, should they ever need it.

Proven Results

It was important for Brooks Academies to find a device that would allow multitasking without sacrificing the teacher-student relationship, and Dynabook helped them achieve that. “The Dynabook laptops have been very well received and outperformed our previous laptops in every way, no comparison,” said Austin. “Purchasing laptops, as small as it sounds, was a morale booster. We wanted our teachers to know we had their back during this challenging year. The last thing we wanted was teacher turnover due to a lack of proper resources.”

Brooks Academies previously purchased laptops directly from vendor websites; but now with Sharp, they receive personalized, consultative support. “Our IT team is small, so we value Sharp’s support. Our account manager genuinely knows all the different personalities of our team and understands the needs of a K-12 school. The trust they have built is something that was missing from our previous vendors. Rather than going online or being placed on hold when I have an issue or question, I can contact the Sharp team and know it’s going to be taken care of,” said Austin.

In addition to the laptops, a Sharp Pro Series MX-M1205 production monochrome document system and numerous Sharp multifunction copiers and printers are strategically placed throughout the district.

To track usage on these devices, Brooks Academies installed PaperCut™ software, an advanced print management solution to monitor activity and set printing policies to reduce costs and supplies. The IT team can quickly pull a report to identify under- or overutilized devices and pinpoint who is printing the most. Sandra Gonzalez, the Sharp account representative said, “Austin is a miracle worker for the schools. Through his vision, he’s been able to save money and reallocate those funds to upgrade technology for its teachers and students.” To date, PaperCut software has significantly cut down on print volume, paper usage and toner consumption.

“One of the things I appreciate most about Sharp is that they don’t seek an immediate gain—they look ahead to ensure we are properly positioned for the future.” said Austin.

Industry

Education

Organization

Brooks Academies of Texas

Challenges

- Laptops not equipped for remote and hybrid instruction
- Laptops froze while hosting Zoom sessions with Google Chrome tabs open
- Screen sharing, breakout rooms and recording not possible
- Small screen size made it difficult to see students during class
- Teachers opted to use personal devices in order to multitask

Solutions

- 150 high-performance Dynabook laptops
- Custom-built Dynabooks to meet teachers’ needs
- Included a four-year Dynabook +Care Service warranty

Results

- Dynabook laptops outperformed the school’s previous laptops
- Boosted morale by providing the proper device for remote/hybrid instruction
- Personalized, consultative and trusted support from the Sharp team

For more information on Dynabook Laptops visit:

<https://business.sharppusa.com/Dynabook-Laptops>



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