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- Wireless Sound System at Sands Middle School

SANDS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Wireless Sound System Boosts Teacher Effectiveness, Student Learning

Teaching middle school students is challenging (albeit rewarding) work. At Sands Middle School in Phoenix, Arizona, Librarian Mary McAskill faced more than the usual hurdles: compromised vocal cords and the ambient noise of an air conditioning system. Essentially forced to yell in order to be heard, her vocal cord problems became serious, while her students continued to tune out. (As any parent knows, adolescents and raised adult voices are like oil and water.)

Surgery for a vocal cord implant helped McAskill regain her voice, but only amplification was going to master the ambient noise problem and allow her to resume her teaching schedule. Reading about a wireless sound system at another school, a solution seemed plausible.

McAskill further researched the issue and found Listen Technologies. Impressed with their thorough assessment and quick response time, she arranged for a Listen representative to provide an on-site demonstration. She liked what she heard.

The system, one that Listen refers to as a "soundfield," employs a wireless collar microphone and two strategically placed speakers. McAskill can now teach in her normal speaking voice, doesn't need to repeat herself as much, and can freely move about the room. "The sound quality is professional, the system isn't goofy looking, and it literally saved my career," she states, noting that despite her successful surgery, the possibility of going on disability was quite real. She likes it so much, in fact, that a behind-the-ear model microphone is next on her list to purchase for the system



Just as rewarding to McAskill is the student response. "I teach them how to find books, conduct effective research, and use the computer lab, critical tools for their success. Now that students can hear me clearly over the air conditioner, they are more fully engaged." The sound system has also proved useful for functions such as library-sponsored family reading nights, teacher presentations and in-services. "All and all, we are getting better, more effective use of our library," says McAskill, and that, for any librarian is music to the ears.