Located just west of Philadelphia, Upper Darby School District serves one of the most densely populated and urbanized townships in Pennsylvania. Over the past two decades, the district has grown from 7,500 to over 12,000 students, making it the largest school system in Delaware County and among the top 11 in the state. The District is comprised of 14 schools, including one high school, two middle schools, ten elementary schools and a kindergarten center.

The Upper Darby School District’s mission is to provide a comprehensive and challenging educational program that encourages all learners to respect others, value education and appreciate and contribute to their community as confident, independent thinkers. Despite the many funding and growth challenges the district faces, Upper Darby’s strengths are numerous. An exceptionally dedicated faculty, including the 2006 PA Teacher of the Year and three PA Teacher of the Year finalists, works diligently with School Board members, teachers, support staff and parents to ensure success for all students.
THE CHALLENGE

As enrollment has increased, the educational and socioeconomic needs of Upper Darby students have grown in complexity and severity. Almost 50 percent of district students meet the low-income standard set by the Free and Reduced Lunch Program, six schools receive Title I school-wide services and Upper Darby students represent an increasingly diverse population. The district educates over 750 immigrants and refugees who are English Language Learners, making literacy a district-wide initiative.

To address the needs of their diverse, growing student population, over the past five years, the Upper Darby School District designed a system of programs aimed at improving student achievement, ensuring safe schools and addressing school capacity issues. In their ongoing efforts to meet or exceed state core curriculum goals, they set forth a plan of strategies including the use of assessment data to drive instruction, adoption of standards-aligned core curricula and expanded integration and use of education technology.

With a lack of funding and limited staff resources, Upper Darby was faced with the challenge of finding the right technology to meet these lofty academic goals.
As a teacher, I cannot ever imagine going back to chalk again. I am teaching on a tool designed to educate in a style the children of the 21st century have come to expect.

Sheila Krusen
3rd grade teacher, Hillcrest Elementary School

Steve Voelker, a ninth grade Science teacher at Upper Darby High School, says, “Implementing Steelcase technology has dramatically increased the level of engagement in my classroom. Students who used to shy away from contributing are now literally lining up to participate! When someone is at the ēno board, I can be sure all eyes in the class are focused on what we are doing.”

She concludes, “As a teacher, I cannot ever imagine going back to chalk again. I am teaching on a tool designed to educate in a style the children of the 21st century have come to expect.”

Upper Darby is a district on the brink of greatness. Despite funding, overcrowding and resource setbacks, the district is triumphing with the support of Steelcase’s interactive solutions. With student and teacher engagement on the rise, attaining higher achievement is no longer a lofty goal, but a reality within close reach.

STEELCASE PRODUCTS
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