



How Jayton-Girard Independent School District is using The Scholastic Network to Flatten School Walls.

If you find yourself driving from Lubbock to Abilene on your way to Dallas on a Friday night, it's worth a slight detour on US 380 to Jayton, Texas to watch the Jaybirds play basketball.

"Our basketball games are a big deal," said Principal Lyle Lackey. "That's when most people come to our school. Our junior class runs our concession stands for all sporting events and the money they earn goes towards a senior trip when they graduate. We're cooking chicken tenders and hamburgers. It's a great meal. They didn't get to go this year because of what happened [school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic], but in most years kids raise enough money to go to Hawaii after their senior year."

Sitting in the Jaybird gymnasium enjoying a pulled pork sandwich and homemade fries you might notice the two TVs hanging on the walls of the gym. And without even trying, you're learning all about Jayton-Girard Independent School, a Pre-K-12 school with 174 students and an A Accountability Rating from the Texas Education Agency.

"We put up two TVs in our gym connected to a media device from The Scholastic Network so everyone sees what's happening in our school." Principal Lackey said. "If you go to one of our games, while you are there you will get a great meal, see a great game and learn all about our school without having to leave the gym."

Student Engagement

Mr. Lackey said, "All of the students like to be recognized and see themselves on the TVs. This helps with discipline during lunchtime. When they're in the cafeteria the little kids are

busy looking for stories about themselves and their friends and talking about what's happening so they're not running around and screaming as much."

Career Training

Every 7th grader at Jayton-Girard is a multimedia journalist. They create the content during their TV and Video class and their teacher posts it to the two TVs in the gym, the five stationed throughout the school and the two TVs located in local businesses. Students produce, edit and upload content playing on each of these TVs. The school can then choose to display the same content on each TV or share different content at different locations and share one message with their students and another with their community.

"Before we bought the new software and media devices from The Scholastic Network, we had old, outdated announcements on the TVs in the school. We wanted something that looked more professional," said Mr. Lackey. "Back then, our 7th grade TV & Video Class just showed video announcements. We still do this and a lot more.

The kids are interviewing teachers and students and they talk about upcoming events. There is a 7th grader videotaping every event. They've learned how to edit their video footage to create one to two-minute stories."

"I like that a student can take a video of something that's happening, edit it and upload it to the system. One of our 7th graders can be at a track meet and immediately upload the video for the teacher to post. We can show live content from anywhere, any time and display it on any or all of the televisions."

Keeping it Simple

"I love the simplicity of it. Two weeks after John [The Scholastic Network Account Executive] came to see us, I showed my daughter their website and, in a few minutes, taught her how to use the templates to create a slide and where to upload it. Within 20 minutes my daughter already had 10 slides created and had content rolling in our school. I went to my Video teacher and showed it to him, and he said, 'We're good, Lyle. Leave us alone.'"

College Bound

Another advantage of partnering with The Scholastic Network is the option to showcase career and college opportunities for students. Universities, community colleges, trade schools, the military and other post-secondary institutions create messages that can be shared with students to build awareness of career and college possibilities.

“When we saw The Scholastic Network for the first time, we really liked that we could display information about Texas colleges to our students and they could see the different post-secondary opportunities they have,” said Mr. Lackey. “I have younger kids who see a message from a college and ask me, ‘Mr. Lackey, where is the University of Texas at Arlington?’ And, then we get to talk about it.”

The Scholastic Network shares the proceeds from these post-secondary partner sponsorships with participating school districts like Jayton-Girard ISD to help them fund their annual subscription costs.

Community Outreach

“We also placed two Scholastic Network devices in our community. We have one in our local Grocery Store called ‘The General Store’ and one at a restaurant called ‘Boots and Spurs,’” explained Mr. Lackey. “I’ve had parents tell me they were excited to see their kid’s project at the science fair while they were eating lunch at the restaurant or they will mention to me that they saw their kid doing a high jump at a track meet.”

“I like being able to tell parents that our kids are creating the content they are seeing. I told one dad, ‘It’s your kid who created that video and he said, ‘Wow! That’s cool! I’ll go home and ask him how he did it.’”

“I recently read a book about flattening the walls of your schools. That’s what we wanted to do. We wanted to flatten our walls, be more transparent and allow parents and the community to see what we’re doing. The Scholastic Network has allowed us to do this.”