



Fayette County
Public Schools

INDUSTRY

- ▶ Education

CHALLENGE

- ▶ Establish the state's first elementary school esports program to positively impact student success and engagement.
- ▶ Overcome the lack of dedicated space and budget to accommodate significant student interest.
- ▶ Find funding for career connection projects, such as producing student-designed team jerseys.

School District Offers Esports to All Ages by Leveraging ViewSonic Display Infrastructure

SCHOOL

Fayette County Public Schools is a large district encompassing the city of Lexington, Kentucky and serving approximately 42,000 students across 57 schools. The second-largest school district in Kentucky, it includes 38 elementary schools, 13 middle schools and 6 high schools, along with preschools and several additional programs/technical centers, with a 60% minority enrollment and over a third of students whose families are economically disadvantaged.

CHALLENGE

Boasting several state championships, the Fayette County Public Schools (FCPS) high schools had enjoyed the benefits of a thriving esports program since 2019. In 2023, the principal of the G. W. Carver STEM Academy, Lamar Allen, set his sights on bringing these benefits to his students.

“He was determined to become the first elementary esports program in the state,” said Shad Lacefield, FCPS STEM Learning Coach, who provides tech support throughout the district and helps esports coordinators with program startup. “As the leader of a STEM school, he knew how much this program could positively impact student success.”

The most immediate challenge to establishing the program was finding the space and equipment to accommodate significant student interest. After that, program staff were challenged with how to fund projects designed to engage students in esports career connections.

“Just one plug is all it takes for the ViewSonic ViewBoard to launch an instant esports lounge. That single connection makes the display the unquestioned focal point—where any room is a ready-to-compete arena.”

— Shad Lacefield, FCPS STEM Learning Coach

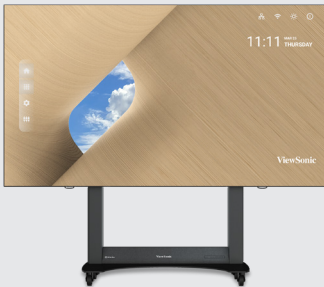


ViewSonic

SOLUTION



- ▶ Leveraged existing infrastructure of 75-inch ViewSonic® ViewBoard® interactive flat panel displays to create equitable access.
- ▶ Utilized mobile carts to create flexible “pop-up” esports lounges in shared spaces like libraries and media centers.



- ▶ Deployed the ViewSonic All-in-One Direct View LED mobile and foldable display for large-scale competitions and events.
- ▶ Partnered with ViewSonic to cover production costs for team jerseys.

SOLUTION

In the five years preceding the dream of an all-ages esports program, FCPS had installed 75-inch ViewSonic ViewBoard interactive flat panel displays in every classroom in order to create a universal classroom experience and equitable environment for student learning across the district. These existing displays, Lacefield realized, could be leveraged to support the elementary esports expansion.

“The ViewSonic IFP displays bring outstanding interactivity and engagement to classroom learning,” said Lacefield. “It was a tremendous investment in our students that we were able to extend as a shared resource to create popup esports lounges. This solved the universal problems of one, how to afford the equipment, and two, where are we going to put it.”



The inaugural club was launched in the G. W. Carver STEM Academy library, which housed a media space ripe for conversion into a part-time esports environment.

“There were several ViewSonic IFP displays already in the room, which serves as a flexible learning space for students, and the school had other ViewSonic ViewBoard displays on mobile carts,” said Lacefield. “It was easy to simply roll them in for the after-school club meetings.”

And with that, mission accomplished: FCPS had the first-ever elementary esports lounge in the state. Next, the team found exciting ways to leverage another ViewSonic display resource: an all-in-one mobile Direct View LED Display folding travel kit.

“The district purchased it for use in large spaces like the auditoriums where we hold conferences and professional development programs,” said Lacefield. “Of course, it also shines as a focal point at in-person esports competitions, where we’re able to display four screens at a time on the one massive display.”

Ultimately, the district was able to provide the after-school club at no cost to participants, thanks to existing infrastructure and support from grants and partnerships. However, when students designed team logos and jerseys, the club had no funds to produce them.

RESULTS

- ▶ Rapid program expansion from a single pilot school to 41 schools (30 elementary and 11 middle) in just two years.
- ▶ Created a cost-free, inclusive extracurricular activity that improves social-emotional and academic outcomes.
- ▶ Maximized hardware investment by using displays for instruction during the day and gaming after school.
- ▶ Fast setup allowed staff to launch an esports arena instantly with just one plug.
- ▶ Developed a strong pipeline of enthusiastic students and supportive parents feeding into high school esports programs.

“The project would have had to remain a creative exercise,” said Lacefield, “But ViewSonic stepped in and covered the cost of every jersey for every player.”

RESULTS

What started with one school quickly exploded to thirty in the span of just two years. By the 2025-2026 school year, spaces in 30 elementary and 11 middle schools were being used for the after-school esports program - with more to come. At one school, the club used a conference room already outfitted with 75-inch ViewSonic ViewBoard IFP displays. At another, the maker space was a perfect fit. Each school was unique, but all made use of existing wall- or mobile cart-mounted ViewSonic ViewBoard displays.

“The ViewSonic cart-mounted displays offer incredible flexibility of use,” said Lacefield. “They can be moved during the day to meet instructional needs, and used after school to support extracurriculars.”

To easily facilitate the transformations, Lacefield created gamer backpacks that house everything needed for the students to connect to and use the displays.

“Once the IFP displays are wheeled in, the students can set up the gaming space quickly and easily,” said Lacefield. “Just one plug is all it takes for the ViewSonic ViewBoard IFP to launch an instant esports lounge. That single connection makes the display the unquestioned focal point—where any room is a ready-to-compete arena.”

In all cases, the results were exciting and impactful.



“The kids absolutely love playing on what to them looks like massive TV screens,” said Lacefield. “And the video quality and speed are incredible - even when running a LAN tournament. The huge screens make it feel so exciting and real to the kids.”

Within a year, the program Lacefield managed merged with the Girls Who Game club, led by Ashley Faulkner. Together they became EPIC Esports and began creating curriculum around the esports industry and other important gaming topics.

“We realized that we were teaching students how to be digital citizens online with their Chromebooks, but not necessarily through gaming. To gain insight, we surveyed a sample of students from across the district,” said Lacefield. “We discovered that 90% were gaming weekly, with 79% engaging with people they didn’t know. To address this, we created content for students and parents on how to safely navigate this ecosystem.”



Along with gathering to game, members of the EPIC Esports program learn about the inner workings of the esports industry and its career opportunities.

“We’re showing our students that, while they may not end up pro gamers, their love of video games could lead them down related career paths,” said Lacefield. “They could become game designers, shout casters, graphic designers, and more.”

To bring these opportunities to life, Lacefield and Faulkner engage students in career connection activities like designing team logos and jerseys.

“Thanks to ViewSonic we were able to produce and provide jerseys with student-designed logos for all of our teams,” said Lacefield. “We are so grateful to them for their support.”

The club’s name, which stands for Engaging Players in Inclusive Competitions, epitomizes its impact on students. At its heart, the FCPS EPIC Esports Club is about engagement. Research has consistently demonstrated that students who participate in extracurricular activities thrive. In every way, involved students do better: academically, socially-emotionally, and in their lives beyond school.

“Most of our esports students weren’t involved in any other extracurricular activities; this club was their first,” said Lacefield. “Now they’re making new friends and expanding their experiences, and the impact on student growth is amazing.”





A district middle school exemplifies this impact.

“These kids have been extremely successful in our region, which includes teams from Florida up through New York,” said Lacefield. “They were in the top five out of 170 teams in a recent competition. Later their coach told us that she saw a big change in students’ behavior and demeanor in school. It gave them a boost of confidence to be one of the best Super Smash teams in the region.”

Coaches at other schools have shared similar feedback, from students and parents.

“A parent of one of my students got emotional during a meeting, while sharing how EPIC Esports helped her son find a place and make friends,” said Jennifer Reams, an Elementary EPIC Esports Coach, “This is a student who has a learning disability and struggles academically, but in esports he excelled, becoming one of our top Mario Kart racers.”

Parental appreciation for the EPIC Esports program has impacted the pipeline to high school esports participation as well.

“In the past, parents were often skeptical about their kids participating,” said Chris Griffith, Esports Coach at Esports State Champion Lafayette High School. “However this year, when I hosted the booth for our esports team at orientation, the middle school parents were thrilled to sign their kids up for our team. There were many students and families excited to continue what they started with EPIC Esports. That was really cool to me.”

The EPIC Esports program has been an unequivocal success, said Lacefield, thanks to the help of partners like ViewSonic.

“It’s been everything we’ve hoped for,” he said. “We have been able to provide a free, safe community where kids can make friends and do what they love, and we’ve seen the positive impact in improved academic and social-emotional outcomes.”