

‘This Feels Different Than Just Zooming at Home’: How Zoom-Enabled Neat Bars Are Reshaping Learning at Burke’s K-8 School

With a mission to educate, encourage, and empower girls, Katherine Delmar Burke School (Burke’s) in San Francisco has been helping young women reach their full potential for over a century. Founded in 1908, Burke’s enrolls 400 girls from diverse backgrounds, providing students with an innovative learning environment that teaches them to think critically and create a strong foundation of knowledge to succeed in an ever-changing world.

Burke’s takes a holistic approach to education with a curriculum that nurtures students’ academic, creative, physical, and cultural growth in a supportive, inclusive environment.

Challenge

When Burke’s went remote to protect the health of its staff and students during the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization needed to ensure it could deliver the same exceptional academic experience in a virtual space.

“Once we knew we were going to be teaching remotely for an extended period, we had to bring our infrastructure up to make sure that our technology didn’t get in the way of learning,” said Mike Matthews, director of program innovation at Burke’s. “We needed to narrow the gap between the quality of the experience we could provide in person and the quality of the experience we could provide virtually.”

Burke’s successfully used Zoom to transition to online learning, but wanted to upgrade its hardware over the summer to offer a more effective virtual learning experience for students and a frictionless user experience for teachers when classes resumed in the fall. The school evaluated a number of hardware solutions for its classrooms, but the large, upfront investment presented a significant barrier.

Burke’s

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Location: San Francisco, California

Industry: Education

Challenges: Implementing effective, affordable hardware solutions for distance learning classrooms, providing exceptional virtual learning experience

Solutions: Zoom Meetings, Neat Bar

Business Benefits: Improved audio and video quality in classrooms, implementation of affordable, effective hardware solution, creation of exceptional learning experience in virtual space

“I found Neat’s hardware on Zoom’s website, and after assessing things like affordability and ease of deployment, we decided to order a Neat Bar. We tested it out, and once we showed it to the leadership team, there was this excitement as we realized, ‘This feels different than just Zooming from home.’ We could all see the possibilities of how we could use it.”

– Mike Matthews

Director of Program Innovation,
Burke’s

“We moved our teachers to Zoom last year at the start of the pandemic, and we finished out our year happy with our success,” Matthews said. “We wanted our students to feel more connected to the classroom, so we started looking at distance learning classrooms. They were incredible, but they were over \$100,000, and we realized that wasn’t going to be practical or sustainable.”

“We needed something we could deploy over the summer for our students returning in the fall,” he added. “The audio and video quality were really important to us, and we didn’t want it to be one more thing our teachers had to learn. They needed to be able to walk in, push start, and get into their lessons.”

Solution

Matthews went looking for an affordable hardware option that would integrate easily with Burke’s technology stack. He came across Neat’s solutions while researching Zoom-native hardware and quickly recognized the value the Neat Bar could bring to Burke’s students.

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Burke’s ordered additional Neat Bars to create cohort spaces for every classroom, which will help teachers deliver an effective virtual learning experience.

“We’ve repurposed all our classrooms and outfitted them with Neat Bars,” Matthews said. “Even our lunchroom has been turned into a Neat Bar Zoom classroom!”

Matthews and his teams have developed a plan to support Burke’s teachers and ensure they can enjoy a seamless, frictionless user experience while teaching with the Neat Bar.

“We have been providing training and tech demos for our teachers and using Google Groups to populate

students’ schedules with Zoom links and calendar invites,” Matthews said. “The Neat Bar is populated in each teacher’s room as well, so when they walk in, they can just pick up their Neat Pad and start the meeting in one click.”

Results

Although Burke’s is using Zoom’s intuitive platform and Neat Bar’s high-quality audio and video to support education throughout the pandemic, the school is already planning for the future.

“Integrating technology into our classrooms is going to be a big part of the future, both here at Burke’s and in schools across the country,” Matthews said. “Technologies like Zoom and Neat will allow us to deliver lessons safely when there are bad air quality days in the city, and we’ve also considered using it for foreign language classes to chat with students in other classrooms across the world. We’re really excited to see how our teachers use everything during the school year.”

Zoom helps businesses and organizations bring their teams together in a frictionless cloud environment to get more done. Our easy, reliable, video- first unified communications platform for video, voice, content sharing, and chat runs across mobile devices, desktops, telephones, and room systems. Founded in 2011, Zoom is a publicly traded company on Nasdaq (ticker: ZM) and headquartered in San Jose, California. Visit zoom.com and follow [@zoom_us](https://twitter.com/zoom_us).