

Success Story:

Ballington Academy for the Arts & Sciences

Innovative Charter Academy in Rural California Leverages Technology to Meet Special Needs

The Challenge

The Ballington Academy for the Arts & Sciences is a charter school designed to address the critical need for innovative educational alternatives for students in Imperial County, California. The Ballington Academy is committed to properly preparing children with a solid foundation of academic excellence and an appreciation of the power and importance of the arts and sciences.

When Ballington first opened, they contracted with a special services provider from San Diego that sent speech therapists from 120 miles away, resulting in unexpected costs and inconveniences. Therapists might not arrive on time, disrupting the school day schedule and making things somewhat chaotic. Since the provider didn't always send the same therapist, the SLPs didn't get to know the students and their cases very well. In addition, IEPs, reports and meetings weren't always done in a timely manner.

Choosing PresenceLearning

As a relatively new charter school, Ballington is open to thinking outside the box. Ms. Grace Jiminez, School Director says, "We're willing to try new things and be innovative. When we approached our County Office of Education for help, they didn't have the personnel to support us but someone had seen a presentation by PresenceLearning and encouraged us to check it out. So we did."

"Over this past year, using PresenceLearning for speech therapy services has been very effective for us. We're very pleased with the quality of service and have enjoyed working with our assigned SLP, Kristin. She has been with us since the beginning and has really gotten to know our kids, their needs, their teachers and their parents."

Benefits & Outcomes

Ms. Jiminez continues, "We have found PresenceLearning and their services to be very friendly, accessible and effective. Having a single SLP who handles all of our students allows her to really get to know each student and participate in all IEP meetings with a tremendous level of credibility. In the beginning, some parents were a bit apprehensive about the idea of using the computer for speech therapy but now they have been won over. Parents can see that the SLP knows their child and understands their needs.

The students adjusted very quickly to this new way of doing things. They participate very well and really enjoy it. We are very happy with their progress."



"It's nice to not have to worry about the HR side of things—no recruiting, no interviews, no screening—it's very clean and smooth. I just call and say 'I need a speech therapist' and I get one that knows what she is doing."

Ms. Grace Jiminez
School Director,
Ballington Academy for
the Arts and Sciences
El Centro, CA

The Ballington instructional aid has been an integral part of the team from the start. She provides a very effective channel of communication between the PresenceLearning SLP and the students' classroom teachers.

"PresenceLearning is definitely saving us money on the costs of delivering special education services. We are in a rural area and bringing in specialized providers incurred significant travel expenses with drive time, mileage and hotels. And, then we weren't getting the kind of service we really wanted. PresenceLearning saves us money AND delivers excellent quality."

"Finally, it's nice to not have to worry about the HR side of things - no recruiting, no interviews, no screening - it's very clean and smooth. I just call and say 'I need a speech therapist' and I get one that knows what she is doing. Our SLP has been with us now for the past year and has become part of our team. Everyone is happy with the PresenceLearning arrangement. Other schools in remote and rural areas that have similar challenges could really benefit from PresenceLearning's services."

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