



Cleveland Metropolitan School District

Transforming Urban Education: How Bluum's EdTech Coaching Model Helped Cleveland Schools Rise to Three-Star Status



This case study examines how Bluum's innovative embedded coaching approach, paired with strategic technology deployment, created sustainable change in one of America's largest urban districts.

The Challenge

Modernizing Technology in a Large Urban District

When the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) began evaluating classroom technology options, they faced a common urban education challenge: aging infrastructure, inconsistent technology adoption, and limited instructional technology support for teachers. With approximately 36,000 students across more than 90 buildings, the district sought not just new hardware, but a transformation in how technology was integrated into teaching and learning.

"I saw students with their heads on their desk or looking tired," recalls Shawn Braxton, Executive Director of IT Customer Excellence at CMSD. "We needed technology that would engage students and allow teachers to be anywhere in the classroom, not tethered to a computer in the corner."





The Solution

Beyond Hardware to Human Support

Bluum partnered with CMSD to implement over 2,000 Clevertouch interactive panels district-wide. What distinguished this implementation wasn't just the scale—it was the human infrastructure Bluum provided alongside the technology.

The Embedded Coaching Difference: Rather than offering one-time training, Bluum embedded two full-time EdTech coaches within the district for multiple years. These coaches—former teachers themselves—provided continuous, personalized support:

- Initial whole-staff orientations tailored to teacher skill levels
- One-on-one coaching during planning periods
- Classroom demonstrations with students present
- On-demand troubleshooting and support

Results

Transformed Learning Experiences and District Performance

The impact of this approach manifested in concrete ways across various classrooms:

Supporting Special Education—A nonverbal student demonstrated previously unknown mathematical abilities when given the opportunity to interact with the Clevertouch panel. “We realized he knew how to count all along,” explained Samuel Roman, School Principal at Luis Munoz Marin Dual Language School. “Paper and pencil wasn’t going to happen, but it did happen on the Clevertouch.”

Breaking Language Barriers—When Microsoft Translator was introduced through coaching sessions, English Language Learners gained immediate access to content in their native languages. For one student who had been running away from class out of frustration, this technology was transformative. “Now she’s the first one in the door,” a teacher reported.

Empowering Student Voice—Shedrina Chapman, Educator and Senior Advisor at John Adams, now lets students control presentations from the panel. “The kids can take control. They have ownership. They can walk around the room changing pages instead of me always at my desk.”

Perhaps most significantly, CMSD has achieved a three-star rating in Ohio’s school rating system—the highest rating of any large urban district in the state and a first in the district’s history.



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Keys to Success

A Partnership Approach

Several elements distinguished Bluum's implementation:

1. **Teacher-centered approach**—Coaches began each relationship by asking "What do you want to do?" rather than dictating technology usage.
2. **Embedded, accessible support**—Coaches became part of the school community, building relationships beyond technical support.
3. **Practical application focus**—Training emphasized solving real classroom challenges over abstract features.
4. **Long-term commitment**—The initial two-year coaching commitment has since been extended due to its success.

"This wasn't just about installing panels—it was about changing teaching and learning," says Curtis Timmons, Information Technology Officer at CMSD. "Bluum walked the plank with us. When we challenge them, they find ways to make it work."

The district has since expanded its partnership with Bluum to include additional technologies like esports facilities, VR headsets, and specialized mounts for students with physical disabilities.



The Future

From Technology Adoption to Innovation

With the foundation of technology and support firmly established, CMSD is now looking toward artificial intelligence, digital signage, and other innovations to further enhance learning.

The district's journey demonstrates that successful educational technology implementation isn't just about the latest hardware—it's about the human support system that helps educators integrate that technology into meaningful learning experiences.

For other districts considering similar initiatives, the lesson is clear: invest not just in devices, but in the ongoing professional development that transforms those devices from expensive decorations into powerful teaching tools.



The Bluum Value Proposition

Create **spaces** with the **tools** needed to **empower educators** to keep students *engaged, connected, and safe* in a **sustainable** way.

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For more information about Bluum's educational technology integration services, visit www.bluum.com

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