

# Amplified Classrooms - Wireless Classroom Microphones Becoming Popular

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**Nearly 250,000 schools have amplified classrooms so every student can focus on the lesson and not strain to hear the teacher over the ventilation system and other noises (an article published in the USA).**

The justification for supporting amplified classrooms is not children with hearing problems. Classrooms are installing sound systems so children don't have to strain to hear the teacher and the teacher doesn't have to talk over noise.

What noise?

- hallway traffic
- heating system fans
- paper shuffling
- dropped pencils
- whispering
- desks opening and closing
- students walking around

Multiply these sounds times 26 students and the noise in a classroom can be very distracting. The teacher's voice is expected to rise above all of this.

## Amplification System Research

Wyoming Elementary in Millburn, N.J. points to research stating children learn better when they hear the teacher clearly. The school installed amplification systems in every classroom K-3. One teacher commented that she no longer loses her voice by the end of a school day and all students can hear her voice. One parent commented that her son, who suffers from frequent ear infections, no longer misses out on classroom instruction.

## Amplified Classrooms Are Growing In Popularity

One company enjoying this popularity is [FrontRow](#), a California-based company that produces amplification systems. FrontRow boasts that over 3,200 school districts now use their equipment. Only five years ago, 1500 districts used the systems so the numbers have quickly doubled.

[LightSpeed Technologies](#) in Portland, Oregon, another amplification systems company has seen a 30% growth

each year for the past three years.

LightSpeed estimates the systems have been installed in nearly 200,000 classrooms nationwide.

## The Cost of Wireless

The cost to install a state of the art amplification system is \$1000 to \$1500 per classroom. Seattle is spending \$1.5 million to install amplification in 1200 classrooms, libraries and gyms, complete with microphones and speakers. The Ohio School Facilities Commission mandates that all new construction or remodeling using state funding must have amplification.

## Academic Results

West Orange, N.J. amplified first grade classrooms at St. Cloud Elementary. No other changes were made to curriculum – only amplification. Reading scores in one year went from 59% to 89%. After seeing these results, the district required amplification in other classrooms. Some researchers state that test scores have improved and classrooms are less stressful with amplification. Students state they can now hear a soft-spoken teacher even across the room or when writing on the board.

## The Acoustical Society of America

Not everyone is jumping on this bandwagon. Some teachers find amplification annoying. And The Acoustical Society of America does not support amplification in all classrooms. The Society's suggestion is to reduce noise in the classroom by having better classroom designs.

## System Details

Older amplification units were bulky, picked up signals from other rooms, and were manually turned on and off. Today, the systems use infrared technology that eliminates any

interference and automatically disconnects when the teacher leaves the classroom. Students do not pick up conversations teachers may have in the hallway, office or bathroom. The microphone is small and hangs on a lanyard leaving the teacher free to teach. A mute button is available for private conversations within the classroom. Teachers must remember to recharge over night.

Students seem to enjoy amplification stating that when the mics are not on it seems like the teachers are whispering.

### **About the Author**

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These systems are especially beneficial to students with ADD, [ADHD](#), learning disabilities, language difficulties or hearing problems. It would be difficult to find a classroom without the just mentioned challenges.

Amplification is no longer just for auditoriums and meeting halls.

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