

## Case study: Jackson Academic STEAM Academy

How Best Buy® Education helped one online STEAM Academy's esports vision come to life—from computers to lighting and everything in between and in record time.

### The Client

In March of 2021, Jackson-Madison County Schools (JMCCS) of Tennessee created a school-within-a-school model to provide asynchronous, student-driven online curriculum to K–12 students, now known as Jackson-Madison County School Academic STEAM Academy, or JASA. It offers students a home-based, learner-paced online curriculum delivered virtually that aligns with a vision to prepare students for a technology-driven future.

### The Challenge

JASA education administrators and technology leadership looked to find an alternative means of creating competition not unlike traditional team sports and activities of other K–12 education institutes. With a Tennessee Department of Education IDEA Innovation Grant, JASA researched creating an esports team, knowing it's a fast-growing segment, especially for students and educators. They would need to find both a tech partner and supplier who could help them from the ground up, and to be there with additional advice and evolving solutions for the future of the school's team.

### The Solution

Best Buy Education lent a consultative approach initially, meeting with David Wicker, JASA Head of Operations, and listened to his vision and goals to work on a plan for the equipment, the technology and keeping him apprised of conversations through the process with key partners like ASUS to help bring it all to life. David explains, "For us to begin our esports team, our Superintendent, Doctor Marlon King, was really on board from the get-go and saw this as a huge resource for our kids. That was when we went to our local Best Buy® store here in Jackson, and they were immensely helpful. They put us in touch with a Best Buy Education Account Manager. We purchased approximately \$20,000-worth of equipment from him—mainly our monitors, our gaming systems, peripherals and so on; everything we needed for the technology. He then just made our vision come true and was able to piece everything together, including building out our entire esports arena. Best Buy Education has been instrumental in the future of our team. It was the connections that our Account Manager was able to make with ASUS, the gaming furniture vendors and others. He is a large piece of why we are so successful; to be able to get all of our components and technology and everything else we needed to compete and in a super-timely manner, and is always so patient with me. He has been there from start to finish.

"That's the other thing," David continues, "he doesn't have to, but he always keeps up with me and emails every so often asking how everything is going; if there's anything else we need and how can



*"Best Buy Education has been unbelievable throughout the process. They took care of everything. I love esports, but I'm also a teacher; I've got 500 kids. My Account Manager took all that work off my shoulders. He made it possible for me to get all the things done that my job requires daily."*

— David Wicker,

Head of Operations, Jackson Academic STEAM Academy

he help? And there are times, for example, I'll say this is what I need from ASUS. He'll say, 'Great, I'll get the pricing and take care of everything.' I don't ever need to do anything else. He takes care of the purchase orders and even initially helped me through acquiring tax-exempt status.

"I never would have thought there was somebody behind the keyboard who was willing to take care of my requests, and scheduling meetings to talk with his contacts and to get all of those things taken care of. Best Buy Education has been unbelievable throughout the process. They continue to take care of everything, and that means a lot to me and all of us because we love esports so much."

### Solution at a glance:

**55+'' LED TV** as main viewer for arena broadcasting.

**Gaming monitors/computers and keyboards** for an entire league team/arena, up to 25 players.

**Gaming systems, controllers and tech peripherals** included for Nintendo Switch, Xbox and PlayStation4.

**Complete set of gaming chairs** for the entire esports arena.

**LED lighting** for the school's esports arena.

**Main sound system** for the school's esports arena.