CASE STUDY

optec DISPLAYS, INC.

Schools Score Big with Digital Signage

A new scoreboard for Arcadia High School, plus how the education market is using digital signage.



Only Optec.

The Challenge

See & Feel the new Arcadia HS Gameday Experience:

YouTube

https://bit.ly/3WK1jZU



Arcadia High School is no stranger to digital signage. The school, which is part of Southern California's Arcadia Unified School District, was one of the first in the area to use video replay on its digital scoreboard back in 2015. Arcadia also involves its students through a video production class that livestreams football games and controls the scoreboard for live feeds and in-game content.

Not content to rest on its laurels, the high school recently looked at its digital signage and realized it was time to upgrade. "The old scoreboard was becoming unreliable and constantly in need of repair," said Christopher Schultz, English teacher/head track coach at Arcadia High School.

Beyond its scoreboard, Arcadia also upgraded two marquee signs outside the school entrances.

To get the job done, Arcadia turned to Quiel School Signs, a sign company that focuses exclusively on LED marquee signs and scoreboards for California schools, districts, and colleges. "They wanted something more robust, full color, and up to date," said Tyler Pratt, director of Business Development at Quiel School Signs.

Quiel School Signs offers a turnkey solution to its clients, which includes not only the digital signage, but the installation and post-installation support as well as working with the Division of the State Architect to get approval on plans and projects. (*Note*: Any construction on a public school in California must receive DSA certification.) "They were looking for a local company like Quiel School Signs to have that local responsiveness, the support, and the turnkey aspect with installation," explained Pratt. "It's about having one point of contact."

Quiel School Signs brought in Optec Displays to supply the three digital sign boards. The company works frequently with Optec and cites its close location and superior technical support as major benefits of working together. "The Optec technical support is second to none. They are super responsive. I don't think I've ever waited on hold for more than five to 10 seconds, and that's not even an exaggeration," said Pratt, who also notes the company always goes the extra mile. "Being privately owned, being nimble enough to respond to our needs and make the operational changes on their end has been huge as well. It's the willingness to be a meaningful partner and make changes to processes that help us on the day to day."

MARQUEES:

- 10mm, Optec Infinity RG DIP LED display, 1120x288 pixels
- 10mm, Optec Infinity RGB DIP LED display, 120x288 pixels

SCOREBOARD:

- 10mm Optec Infinity HB2-SMD display, 528-by-960 pixels

Lesson: What to Consider Before a Digital Sign Investment

For schools considering an investment in digital signage, it may be difficult to know where to start. Quiel School Signs' Tyler Pratt offered two main pieces of advice.

01 Define a Goal

What are you trying to get out of this sign? Is it purely for messaging and communication? Or is it to promote awareness of the school?

The layout of the school plays a role because if it's tucked into a neighborhood, then you probably don't need a large, freestanding sign on the street. A wall-mounted sign will work. But if you're a larger high school on a main busy road, you may want to consider a freestanding, double-sided sign because you're getting a lot of eyes on the sign. You can even look into selling advertising on the sign.



Optec provided three 10mm digital displays for Arcadia High School: two marquee signs for the school entrances and a new scoreboard.

02 Quality & Support

When you're considering a digital sign vendor, some of the main questions to consider include:

- Is the sign going to hold up over time?
- Is it going to be supported and are parts going to be available long term?
- When there is a problem, who is going to support it?

With construction or outdoor electronics, it's not a matter of if an issue or problem is going to come up, it's a matter of when. So having peace of mind knowing that a company is in place to support the sign long term goes a long way in reducing potential downtime.



Marquee Signs

After discussing its goals and needs, Arcadia decided to go with 10mm pixel pitch displays for the scoreboard and two marquee signs, which would allow for not only higher resolution and better video capabilities, but also high brightness that could combat the California sun.

Marquee Signs

Two marquee signs were installed on the north and south sides of the school.

Arcadia uses the signs to share school updates, welcome messages, schedules and events, and information like time and temperature.

Full video capabilities allow the school greater freedom with their content as well as clearer messages for passersby.

Scoreboard

Arcadia's old scoreboard was a combination of video with a traditional fixed digit board. The school wanted a larger, full digital board to give them greater visual capabilities and more opportunities for use. "Being able to display [scoring data] clearly and legibly from the other side of the field was a big reason why they wanted to go full video," said Pratt.

Arcadia also wanted their technology to match that of competing schools as large video boards become more common. "They really wanted to show it off," said Pratt. "They wanted it to be on par with something that would be in the pro space or the high-level space."

The high school uses the new scoreboard for any events, assemblies, or sporting events that happen at the stadium. However, it is mainly used for scoring, live results, and in-game content for football games and track events.

"Having a larger board adds to the production quality of all of our activities that use the stadium," said Schultz.

The scoreboard becomes especially important when the school hosts the annual Arcadia Invitational sponsored by Nike each year. The event is one of the largest outdoor high school meets in the United States, with more than 4,000 high school athletes competing. Aside from showing instant live results, the scoreboard also shows video content throughout the Invitational, both pre-produced packages as well as competition feeds.

To run the scoreboard, Arcadia uses a few pieces of software, and it was the first account in the country to use Optec's new Scortec scoreboard software. Scortec gives Arcadia more freedom to score the game and run content thanks to flexible zoning controls, intuitive design capabilities, and the capacity to connect wireless devices to operate the scoreboard from anywhere. "It is much more complex than what we used before. We are getting better at it each week," said Schultz, who noted that Optec's support team has been very responsive. "[They have] gone above and beyond in helping me understand and be able to operate the software. I would give the service/support a very positive review."

Feedback from the Arcadia community about the new digital signs has been positive. "It is a major upgrade. It has raised our in-game content capabilities," said Schultz. "Over time, we hope to possibly add content related to sponsorships so that we can generate some revenue from this investment."



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—Christopher Schultz, Arcadia High School

Lesson: How Schools are Using Digital Signage

Digital signage is not only a great communication tool for schools, it also helps them to stay engaged with the community. Here are some of the top ways schools are making use of digital signage.

Staying Informed

Staying Informed. One of the most common uses of digital signage for schools is to keep students and parents informed about upcoming events, deadlines, fundraisers, days off, and more.

Community Building

Schools will often use digital boards to promote school pride by showcasing student achievements and using brand colors in messaging. They will also share things like birthday announcements, which can also become a revenue stream if schools choose to charge for that service. The physical footprint of the digital sign itself can also help to build community when students and staff use it as a location for a photo opportunity.

Safety & Security

In crisis situations, every second counts, and digital signage can help spread shelter in place orders, lock down information, emergency broadcasts, and more in just seconds across every screen in a district. The signs can also keep safety protocols and processes front of mind by circulating year-round on the screens.



Optec's new Scoretec scoreboard software features flexible zoning controls, intuitive design capabilities, and the capacity to connect wireless devices to operate the scoreboard from anywhere.