Google for Education

Rochester City School District teaches students lifelong technology skills using Google for Education tools

Background
Located south of Lake Ontario in New York state, Rochester City School District educates students of all ages and demographics. More than 32,000 children and 10,000 adults attend the 39 elementary schools, 19 secondary schools, one adult / family learning center and several alternative education programs. The district's vision is that every child is a work of art and can create a masterpiece.

Challenge
Rochester City School District wanted to provide an affordable solution for teachers and students to collaborate in an environment that offered a streamlined implementation and management structure. The schools mainly used laptop carts to access web-based content and wanted devices built for creating and consuming content on the web. The district needed a solution that would encourage collaboration among students and teachers, regardless of their location.

What they wanted to do
- Introduce devices built for web-based content
- Provide students with technology that encourages collaboration

What they did
- Rolled out Google Apps for Education and Google Classroom
- Introduced 7,000 Chromebooks across grade levels

What they accomplished
- Developed students' teamwork and technology skills
- Provided teachers with a method to provide instant feedback
- Helped students keep documents organized

"The ability to collaborate, receive immediate feedback and conduct research for a long paper are skills you need in business and college. We're teaching students not only how to get through their class, but how to use technology to work in a more efficient and collaborative way."
—Randy Schenk, Instructional Technology Teacher, Rochester City School District

Solution
Rochester City School District introduced Google Apps for Education and 7,000 Chromebooks in 2014 as part of an effort to refresh its technology solutions. The district chose Chromebooks for their collaboration features, quick startup time and long battery life. The schools also rolled out Google Classroom during the same school year.

A majority of schools in the district use Chromebooks in a cart model, but three high schools and two elementary schools provide students with 1:1 Chromebook use any time they're at school. Within the next couple of years, every classroom will be outfitted with Chromebook carts.
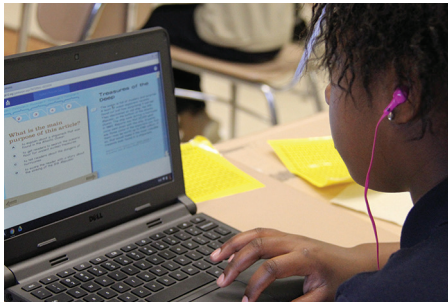
Benefits
Teaching students teamwork
With Google Apps for Education, students are learning to work as a team. For example, a fifth grade teacher assigned students to work with a classmate to research and write about a specific biome. Students used Google Docs to collaborate in person with their partner and leave comments in the shared document when they worked on the project from home. They created physical representations of their biomes using the shapes, lines and colors features in Docs. They turned in the assignment via Google Classroom and wrote a reflective piece on the experience of collaborating and using Google for Education tools.

Google for Education

A solution built for learning and designed for the classroom that includes easy-to-manage, affordable devices like Chromebooks, productivity tools like Google Apps for Education with Classroom, and limitless educational content in Google Play for Education. Together these tools help teachers inspire curiosity, while students learn better together, wherever they are.

For more information visit:
www.google.com/edu

Students are also learning how to use technology in the classroom, an opportunity that many wouldn't have access to otherwise. More than four out of five students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and many don't have computers at home. The district finds that using Chromebooks and Google Apps for Education helps students develop their technology skills.

"The ability to collaborate, receive immediate feedback and conduct research for a long paper are skills you need in business and college," says Randy Schenk, instructional technology teacher at Rochester City School District. "We're teaching students not only how to get through their class, but how to use technology to work in a more efficient and collaborative way."

Instant feedback

Teachers can see students' progress as they, for instance, turn an outline into a five-page paper. With this transparency, teachers can provide comments as students work, so feedback becomes ingrained in the content creation process. With Google Classroom, teachers can also see which students haven't worked an assignment and can remind them to get started.

"One of the brilliant aspects of Google Apps for Education is students are more organized and know where to find their work."
—Thom Burrell, Network Administrator, Rochester City School District

Staying organized

Students used to complain about losing documents and assignments because they forgot where they had saved them. With Classroom, students stay organized since all of their material is accessible in one hub. They can create assignments and easily turn them in without switching systems. The district doesn't have to give students flash drives, since they have unlimited storage in the cloud with Google Apps for Education. Says Thom Burrell, network administrator: "One of the brilliant aspects of Google Apps for Education is students are more organized and know where to find their work."

Google for Education tools have helped Rochester City School District transform learning and achieve its vision of teaching students lifelong skills.

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