



Customer: Cicero School District 99
Website: <http://www.cicd99.edu/>
Customer Size: 16 schools; 13,500 students; 1,000 certified staff
Country or Region: United States
Industry: Education, Primary

Customer Profile

Cicero School District 99 manages 16 schools in Cicero, a predominantly Hispanic, low-income suburb of Chicago.

Software and Services

- Windows 8.1 Enterprise
- Microsoft Office
- System Center Configuration Manager

Hardware

- Microsoft Surface Pro 3

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Cicero School District Takes ESL Learning to the Next Level with Surface Pro 3

“We want every student to have a Surface Pro 3 in their hands, so we can continue to facilitate learning both in and out of the classroom, and ensure students can acquire skills that will prepare them for future careers.”

Rudy Hernandez – Superintendent Cicero School District 99

Teachers use Surface Pro 3 in the classroom to support students learning English as a Second Language (ESL)

Business Needs

In a country where most people have access to personal technology devices, the highly Hispanic Cicero School District 99 outside Chicago, Illinois consists of more than 90 percent low-income students with variable access to Internet or technology devices at home. More than 50 percent of the students speak Spanish as their first language and are learning English as a second language while attending school.

The Cicero School District’s goal was to cater to these ESL students by finding a technology solution that could easily augment their ESL learning program with video, audio, and visual learning, while simultaneously helping them teach students real-world technology skills they will need in the workforce of tomorrow.

While the schools had employed desktop solutions in the past, they were looking for a mobile computing solution that would

allow students to use technology in the classroom as they learn curriculum, instead of separating their technology education from daily curriculum in a computer lab environment.

Additional needs in the large district with limited IT staff was for easy device deployment and management, a plan to assist teachers with adoption of the new technology, and compliance with requirements for Common Core State Standards testing.

Solution

“We went with the Surface Pro 3 because it’s a powerful device,” says Bryan Snyder, Assistant Director of Information Services for Cicero Public School District. “It’s just like being on a laptop with full access to the Office suite, plus all the features of a mobile device. Snap that keyboard on, and our students instantly go from consuming information to being productive with it.”

We're constantly raving about the productivity that the Surface Pro 3 provides."

With no doubt that technology will change during the course of a student's education, the district is working to seamlessly integrate today's latest technology into curriculum across grade levels so that students grow comfortable with touch-based, interactive learning. "Ideally, we'd like to get a device in the hands of every student, so they're able to seek out information, synthesize information, think critically, work as a part of a bigger team, and be successful in a global economy," explains Snyder.

Managing District-wide Deployment

"We looked at all types of devices, but from an operating system perspective, there's absolutely no comparison to Windows 8.1 Enterprise," explains Director of Information Services Brad Randmark. "The Surface Pro 3 is clearly an enterprise device; allowing us to use Microsoft System Center to manage and protect our devices. We have control over every aspect of the machine, and can even connect to the device remotely to provide training and support."

Microsoft Store Supports and Trains

With 16 schools, Cicero School District anticipated challenges in deploying 4,000 devices to more than 13,500 students and 1,000 certified staff. So, they turned to the local Microsoft Store in Oak Brook, Illinois for assistance.

"They've been extraordinarily helpful in providing support in both the setup and configuration of our devices, as well as training of staff members," says Randmark. "I've never seen such personal attention to detail as what we get from the Microsoft Store; they've gone far above and beyond a typical vendor relationship."

The store has helped the school district image all four thousand devices, get them set up in the charging carts, and deploy them into classrooms. Additionally, they've helped to train and equip teachers with docking stations, larger monitors for their desks, and accessories.

One of the advantages of having the Microsoft Store nearby is that teachers can set up personal training sessions in the store to learn more about specific topics such as OneNote, PowerPoint, Excel and other productivity tools in the Office suite they wish to use in the classroom.

Technology Adoption

In their quest to seamlessly integrate technology into the curriculum, Cicero also hired a team of technology resource teachers who are available to support and train other teachers across the district on how to use technology in the classroom. "If I need help, I just email the team and they send an instructor to help with any technology needs I have," says 7th grade teacher Michelle Smith. "For example, if I want to know how to assign my students leveled readings on the Internet and then have them submit them to me, Brian shows up and walks me through how to do it."

Today, instead of having traditional curriculum in the classroom and technology instruction down the hall in a computer lab, student technology instruction is integrated as part of the lesson plan—a benefit made possible by moving from desktop computers to mobile devices like the Surface Pro 3.

Teachers are also finding that the students themselves enjoy teaching younger students how to use devices, along with embracing the responsibility of caring for their Surfaces. "I've put the kids in charge of the devices," says Smith. "Every night,

one of my students will make sure they're all plugged in to charge and locked up; then they give me the key." And finally, in addition to training teachers and students in how to use technology as a learning and productivity tool, the district is bringing parents in to use the Surface Pro 3 devices, so that everyone in the family is benefitting and becoming comfortable with technology.

Benefits

Programs that Cater to ESL Needs

By deploying Surface Pro 3 devices, the school district is using technology to augment ESL learning using Surface microphones, speakers, and cameras to support audio and video learning activities as well as third-party programs such as Brain Pop, World Book Online, and Read, Write Gold, to help reinforce concepts. For example, at Sherlock Elementary School, Principal Rita Tarullo says, "The Surface Pro 3s are great because if someone at home may not be able to read to the students in English, they can have material read to them on the computer."

Increasing Students' Global Reach

"We're always looking for resources to enhance learning both in and out of the classroom. That's why we went with these devices," explains Superintendent of Cicero Schools, Rudy Hernandez. Students can check out and return library books from their device. In class, when students are at various reading levels, some can watch videos or listen to stories read to them on their devices. "We feel students should not be limited to only what's in our town," says Hernandez. "Surface Pro 3 is incredibly user-friendly and lets us provide a more global experience."

Common Core Compliant

As with other school districts in the US, Cicero is preparing for the Common Core

State Standards initiative which includes digital assessment.

"PARCC testing is extremely important to any school district and the Surface Pro 3 has a keyboard that's not Bluetooth, an appropriate size screen, and the battery life to handle the full day of PARCC testing. So, the Surface Pro 3 is a natural choice for PARCC testing," says Director of Information Services, Brad Randmark.

Increased Productivity

Evidence shows that students, teachers, and administrators alike are all motivated by their new access to the mobile touch-screen devices. Productivity gains are being made in and out of the classroom. In Michelle Smith's 7th grade classes, her students use their Surface Pro 3 devices to watch videos, take quizzes, and email her the results. "I receive an individual email from each student through an application called BrainPOP," says Michelle. "It gives me their score, shows me which questions they missed, and even tells me how much time it took them."

Another productivity gain the district has enjoyed is related to testing. Where in the past, periodic MAP assessments were administered to groups of four students at a time, today each child in a classroom of 30 can have access to their own Surface Pro 3 with headphones. What took months to accomplish before, can now occur within a 45-minute period.

Digital Note-taking

As a member of the district's Information Services team, Brian Snyder uses his Surface Pro 3 with a digital pen when observing teachers, and attaches it to a large monitor when in his office, entirely eliminating his need for a desktop or laptop. "The coolest part about the pen is that you push the button and you're immediately down to

business. I don't have to open it up, click a power button, or wait," he says. "It works just as a pen and paper would." Brian's colleague Brad Randmark also utilizes the digital pen for note-taking and says, "The real benefit of not using a legal pad is I have all my notes from every meeting archived in OneNote. With just a couple of taps on the screen, I can recall my notes from a meeting earlier today or from up to three years ago."

Preparing Students for Future Jobs

Today, Cicero School District has one Surface Pro 3 cart of 30 devices for every four classrooms to share. "Teachers love them. Students love them. Parents love them. It's honestly been a wonderful experience," says principal Tarullo. "We've really built our community all working together with this new technology. Keeping up with technology is going to determine whether or not our students are successful and competitive in the workforce." The district's goal is to provide an eventual one-to-one ratio, where every student will have access to his or her own Surface Pro 3 device.

Superintendent Hernandez describes their vision, "Our plan is to make sure our students get comfortable with 21st-century technology and that they acquire skills that will prepare them for future careers. We want every student to have a Surface Pro 3 in their hand, so we can continue to facilitate learning both in and out of the classroom."

For more information about Surface Pro 3 for education, please visit:

www.microsoft.com/education