

Customer Case Study

District: Green Bay Area Public Schools

State: Wisconsin

District Size: 21,000 Students

Economically Disadvantaged: 60%



Green Bay Area Public Schools District Simplifies Mobile Broadband Implementation

The Green Bay Area Public School District, like many across the country, is focused on how to successfully integrate technology into their teaching process. With 41 schools and more than 21,000 students, 60 percent of whom qualify for the free or reduced-cost lunch program, ensuring digital equity among the students both inside and outside of the classroom can be a challenge.

“We’re focused on developing technology-rich lessons as part of the District’s curriculum goal,” said Diane Doersch, Chief Technology & Information Officer of Green Bay Area Public Schools. “Using digital learning, students can collaborate together on documents and communicate with their teachers in and out of the classroom. Providing student mobile broadband gives teachers an opportunity to enhance their lessons and not hold back on assignments because some students may not have Internet access at home.”

When Diane was charged with making sure that all the students in Green Bay had access to the Internet after school, she knew the key to success would be to implement a thoughtful and organized system that could be easily managed across the 10 schools in the pilot program.

Laying the Groundwork

As a first step, Diane’s technology team evaluated several options for Internet connectivity and decided on the Kajeet SmartSpot® device, a MiFi® brand mobile hotspot from Novatel Wireless, because of its filtered, managed service offering access to CIPA-compliant Internet content that can be easily monitored and controlled remotely. They wanted the focus to be on the students’ educational needs and ensuring student safety with the same protections and filters provided in school.

The technology team then “test-drove” several Kajeet SmartSpot devices, to make sure that once they were in the hands of their students there would be no problems with device compliance, network connectivity or ease of use. *“It’s so easy for the students to use. There are not a lot of buttons - just on, off, right or left. We can even turn off the devices during sleep hours.”*

“In today’s competitive world, it is important that school districts support student access to technology, including the Internet, not only in school but in the home as well. ”

-- Diane Doersch, Chief
Technology & Information
Officer

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The Check-out Model - Serving More Kids for Less

In order to offer Internet connectivity to as many students as possible, Green Bay's technology team implemented a check-out model in each of the schools. Students would be able to check out the Kajeet SmartSpot devices, as well as laptop computers for up to three days at a time. With help from Kajeet, they created permission slips and a responsibility and use agreement that were managed through the school office. Once the forms were signed, the secretary put a flag in the student information system granting permission for that student to check out a device.

Next, they used Google Docs to house a spreadsheet that was accessible to all staff listing the number of Kajeet SmartSpot devices and laptop computers available, who had checked them out and when they were due back. Then it was put in the hands of the teachers to determine student need and assign devices.

Staff Training, Simplified

Prior to launching the program and delivering the Kajeet SmartSpot devices to the schools, the technology team attended staff meetings to train every teacher and staff member on the checkout procedures, use of the Google Docs form, and how to operate the Kajeet SmartSpot devices. Now it was finally time to deliver the MiFis to each school and get them into the hands of the students who needed them. Along with the devices, a how-to video was sent to the staff to cover any residual questions they might have as well as to provide training to new staff members.

The Results

The teachers in the Green Bay Area Public Schools couldn't be more pleased with the program. They can now create lesson plans that incorporate technology without concern for whether all of their students will be able to fully participate. Green Bay teacher Darryl Buck's sentiments are echoed across the school system:

“I serve several students who don't have access to reliable computers and/or Internet. I am trying to create an environment where electronic communication is, if not the norm, a major component of our communication. ‘Electronic Publication’ is the final step in the writing process for my students. Without Kajeet, this wouldn't be possible for far too many of my students. Without this option, I don't feel that they would be prepared for the demands they would encounter beyond graduation.”

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