



CASE STUDY

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# Saline Area Schools

Student Led, Future Focused - Making it happen from the  
IT Director's perspective

## Saline Area Schools

Saline Area Schools District consists of one high school and six primaries totalling 5,400 students. Saline is an affluent bedroom town outside of Ann Arbor, Michigan in the United States. The District's goal is to 'Equip all students with the knowledge, technological proficiency, and personal skills necessary to succeed in an increasingly complex society.' An integral part of achieving this objective was the 'Next-Gen Program' where teachers were encouraged to revisit pedagogical practices through a new lens and to utilize technology to afford students personalized, blended and rigorous learning experiences.

The start of the next academic year sees the program successfully cascaded into all classrooms and a district-wide shift in focus. The new direction is an emphasis on student voice and choice in their learning with the name 'Next-Gen' being usurped by the call to action 'Student Led, Future Focused'.

Underpinning the schools' increasing use of technology have been 4,500 school-owned devices, delivered via Chromebook cart or iPad cart. Supplementing the school devices is a voluntary Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) scheme that has seen students bringing to school smartphones, tablets or laptops. Troy Wissink is Director of Technology for the District with a team of seven technicians and one administrator.



## Supporting 21st Century Learning: An IT Director's Three Prerequisites

### Scalability

Supporting the pedagogical shift and subsequent increase in devices and internet usage made clear to Troy the importance of a number of prerequisites. The most critical of these was firewall scalability. The expansion in the number of devices on the network meant faster internet bandwidth and significant firewall upgrades to cope with the volume, "Every time we expanded we had to buy new hardware for the firewall and spend time installing

it. We needed to find a more flexible and versatile firewall solution that was easily scalable and cost-effective.”

The Saline District uses a Teacher Dashboard to manage student learning and it was suggested that Linewize, a virtual server-based student internet management system might provide the District with the flexibility it required.

The initial trial was successful and Linewize has been rolled out across the high school, with the primary schools coming on board soon.

“Linewize’s virtual server scales seamlessly with the numbers, meaning no more expenditure on the purchase and installation of hardware.”

– TROY WISSINK, DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY

## Granularity

Troy also identified that the IT Department needed what he refers to as “more eyes” on the students. Linewize’s Layer 7 Application provides Troy and his team with complete knowledge of network utilization, not only in terms of bandwidth, but also across all layers, even to the application level, “Linewize actually lets us see what the students are doing. Previously if a student visited something in Google Drive, we would have a non-user friendly screen indicating that they were looking at one of a possible ten websites for example. With Linewize we could actually see what app they were using and the information is presented in an easy to understand format.”

The granularity of the reporting systems has made Troy and his team’s lives easier. Troy receives a comprehensive weekly report whilst his technical staff are set up to receive email alerts when a student attempts to access a blocked site, informing them of the exact details of the violation. This information is forwarded to teachers who will discuss the incident with the student, Troy making himself available if required to support the teacher.

Troy believes that this level of visibility will encourage more parents to permit their children to bring devices to school, secure in the knowledge that the IT Department and teachers are completely aware of everything that the child accesses on that device.

## Classroom-centricity

At the start of the next academic year Saline Area Schools will roll out Classwize, Linewize's companion classroom internet management tool for teachers. However, word of mouth has meant that one pilot class using Classwize has already expanded to twelve and is spreading, "The teachers love the fact that they can see what the students are doing and can keep the students on-task." Troy describes how a Writing Teacher, who wanted students to free flow using only their thoughts, limited the class to Google Drive for the duration of the activity. That capability is something that the teachers crave.

Classwize is also benefitting the IT Department by enabling filtering management to be delegated to teaching staff, freeing up ICT staff time to focus on the smooth running of the school's IT systems.

"Now we can offload content management to teachers. My staff are already seeing a reduced workload as the teachers using Classwize are managing what websites students can and can't access rather than using tech support."

– TROY WISSINK, DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY

## Future Focused

Being future focused is not just a pedagogical goal but key for the IT Department. The number one benefit of Linewize for Saline's IT Director is the scalability. No matter the technology demands of the schools' Student-Led, Future Focused direction, Linewize's virtual server will simply scale with the numbers, no hardware required.



## About Linewize

Linewize is passionate about making student internet management easy.

## Learn more

Visit us [www.linewize.com](http://www.linewize.com)

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Document RevA

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