Upgrading Network Equipment Across a School District

Designing and Installing a Meraki Network Upgrade

Industry
Education

Client Profile
A large School District in Ohio comprises a combined total of 11 elementary, middle and high schools across a 25 square mile territory near Cincinnati in Ohio.

Business Situation
The district's existing networking equipment needed upgrades and additions to deliver reliable, high-performance connectivity to students, staff and faculty.

Solution
ITsavvy designed and installed an E-Rate-approved Meraki network upgrade in every building within the School District.

Benefits
- Fast, dependable Internet now available for students, faculty and staff
- Remote learning improvements
- Improved learning outcomes
- Single-pane-of-glass view into the entire network
- Completed in compliance with E-Rate rules and regulations

About the Client

The School District today comprises seven K-5 schools, two middle schools and two high schools. Stretching across 25 square miles, the district educates around 6500 students.

Their Challenge

The School District's network was standardized on cloud networking provider Cisco Meraki. It needed to be enhanced and upgraded with new switches, access points, transceivers and more across all its campuses. The upgrade needed to be completed within the proper timelines and in accordance with the rules and regulations of the E-Rate program.

"We embarked on a shared project goal with the School District. Our combined goal was to **create a powerful networked learning environment for every student, teacher and administrator in the district**.*"*

Scott Gibson, Senior Client Executive ITsavvy

E-Rate

The E-Rate program is administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), under the direction of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). USAC's E-Rate program provides funding for quality telecommunications, networking, and information services and equipment. As with any federal program, there are guidelines which schools must follow to meet eligibility requirements and determine the level of funding they can be allocated. Because of this, the district needed a technology services provider who is versed in the E-Rate program just as much as they needed someone who understood networking design and installation.

The Solution

It was clear that the School District's existing equipment needed to be upgraded to deliver the level of networking the district needed. Performance, especially during peak periods, was weak across all 11 campuses. And the network was consistently unreliable, with unacceptable lag times and too many dropped connections.

Things were even more troublesome in specific areas, notably the district's Fishbowl mini basketball area and the high school auditorium; here, the demand on the network was enormous.

Our Solution: District-wide Network Upgrade

Once the funding was completed, ITsavvy and its teams went to work. Here are the phases of the project:

Project Initiation
This included assigning a project manager and establishing the method for gathering project information.

Installing Onsite Switches
This included removing outdated equipment to free up rack space, racking and labeling new equipment, and connecting end-point patch cables.

Configuring Onsite Switches
This included network addressing, connecting uplinks and configuring VLANs.

Installing Onsite Wireless Access Point
This included cabling and hanging 16 access points, recording all relevant information about each, and then importing the access points into the Meraki dashboard.

Onsite Wireless Configuration
This included configuring access points with Radio profiles and their unique SSIDs, provisioning the access points, and verifying their online status.

Network Power Empowers Students
Today, powerful, reliable internet is available for every student and every staff member at every corner of the School District. Just as importantly, the School District was able to qualify for E-Rate funding, which helped it improve its networking without imploding its budget.

"ITsavvy was proud of the work the whole team—the school district's IT group, our partners and our project leaders—did to rapidly improve student learning through flawless networking performance and availability."

Scott Gibson, Senior Client Executive ITsavvy

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For more information, please contact an ITsavvy Client Executive.

1.855.ITsavvy   ITsavvy.com   info@ITsavvy.com