

Dublin Unified School District eliminates IT issues, empowers collaboration with Google Apps for Education, Google Classroom, and Chromebooks



About Dublin Unified School District

- <http://www.dublin.k12.ca.us/>
- A public, suburban school district
- Serves approximately 10,000 students
- Located 45 minutes east of Silicon Valley

What they wanted to do

- Create more opportunities for student collaboration
- Provide teachers, administrators and staff with one email, calendar and classroom organization system, minimizing administrative headaches

What they did

- Standardized Google Apps for Education and Google Classroom across 10 schools
- Introduced 7,000 additional Chromebooks to elementary, middle and high school students

What they accomplished

- Improved district-wide communication between parents, teachers, administration and staff
- Gave teachers the tools needed to organize their classrooms and encourage student collaboration
- Allowed for easy administrative controls and increased security



About Dublin Unified School District

Based in Dublin, one of California's fastest-growing cities, Dublin Unified School District (DUSD) is high-performing and diverse. DUSD has just under 10,000 students and ranks among the top 9 percent of top-performing unified school districts in California. Given its proximity to Silicon Valley, it's one of the most tech-savvy districts in the country. DUSD introduced a fully-integrated Google for Education environment to empower teachers to better communicate with parents, eliminate time spent on IT holdups and help students collaborate with ease.

Challenge

Before adopting Google Apps in early 2015, DUSD was expanding rapidly. At the time, the district used Novell GroupWise as its primary email solution. It suffered frequent outages and was difficult to use on mobile devices, which was frustrating for teachers and administrators alike.

Savvy teachers used Google Apps in their classroom on an ad hoc basis, but they lacked a central system to organize documents, coordinate schedules and send email. Teachers and administrators struggled to reconcile two disparate email and calendar systems, which led to miscommunications, delayed responses and missed meetings. Staff also had no way to meet remotely, so some administrators would have to travel to attend district-wide meetings.

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—Traci Bonde, chief technology officer, Dublin USD

Solution

When chief technology officer Traci Bonde joined DUSD in January 2015, she organized the transition to Google Apps for Education to equip teachers, students and staff with a single, integrated system for sharing information and collaborating on the same platform.

"We chose Google Apps for Education because a number of teachers were already using the tools in their classroom, and parents were clamoring to switch to Google," Bonde says. "We knew Chromebooks would be incredibly easy for students to use, and we tried Google Classroom because it makes for much easier classroom collaboration."

In 2015, DUSD introduced 7,000 Chromebooks this year among its 11 schools. It also launched a Google Classroom pilot program, which has received rave reviews from parents and teachers, who praise how it keeps students organized on homework assignments, tests and group projects.



Benefits

More efficient communication

With Google for Education, teachers can manage homework assignments and set deadline reminders, which helps students stay organized and prepare for their classes. Google Classroom also reminds parents about upcoming tests so they can help their kids study. Parents feel more involved with their children's schoolwork, which leads to a better partnership between teachers and parents.

Because Google for Education is mobile friendly, teachers can now manage student assignments and respond to emails from their smartphones. Google Hangouts also eliminates the commute district leaders regularly spent traveling to meetings. Now, they use Hangouts to check in with colleagues, saving time and money.

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—David Luehrs, biology teacher, Dublin USD

Improved information-sharing for teachers

Teachers are beginning to use Google Forms to create and assign tests and quizzes. Because Forms automatically populate data into Google Sheets, teachers can easily collect, organize and analyze results. This helps them a better understand how students are performing.

David Luehrs, a biology teacher at DUSD, appreciates that Google Apps help him share digital resources, including an online textbook, interactive worksheets and feedback, with his classes. He even posts photos of his whiteboard on Google Classroom so students can keep up to date when they're absent and ask questions when they're working at home.

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Greater visibility into how students use technology

While technology and internet access helps students collaborate more and acclimate to a tech-centric world, DUSD is concerned that its teenaged students may try to hack into the IT system.

Google for Education integrates with third-party apps to create easy controls for IT administrators. This gives them a window into what content each student accesses, and allows them to pinpoint a student who may attempt a sneaky cyber prank before damage is done. "We had zero security concerns around migrating to the cloud," Bonde says.

Administrators love that Google Apps keep the district secure, while equipping its staff and students with the tools they need to communicate, collaborate and stay organized. After transitioning to Google for Education, people across DUSD are enthusiastic about continuing to incorporate technology into teaching and learning.

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.

“Google Classroom is a great organizational tool that allows students to monitor their assignments more carefully than with a traditional student planner. If they forget to write down an assignment, it’s available 24/7 from the Cloud and provides a clear understanding of workflow.”

—David Luehrs, biology teacher, Dublin USD

“Life was drab, boring and gray before I started using Google Apps for Education,” says Erin Vallejo, a teacher and site tech coordinator at DUSD. “Now it’s colorful, exciting and challenging — and I waste no sleep trying to resolve tech issues. I have created and learned so much. It keeps me motivated to try new things.”

