

Lamoille North Supervisory Union Case Study

High-Speed Internet Transforms Learning at Vermont School District

FairPoint Communications partnered with Lamoille North Supervisory Union, a school system in rural Lamoille County, V.T., to bring high-speed Internet to the classroom so students and staff can enjoy the essential digital connections they need to succeed.



Educational Challenges

Colleges and workplaces today expect candidates to how up with technology skills. Thus, elementary and secondary schools must be equipped to prepare students to communicate, collaborate, work and create using technology. Until recently, the Lamoille North Supervisory Union school district in rural Northern Vermont struggled to integrate technology resources in the classroom. With 2,450 students and staff in the communities of Belvidere, Cambridge, Eden, Hyde Park, Johnson and Waterville, there is constant demand for online data and wireless connectivity. But slow, unreliable Internet service prevented teachers from using technology in lessons and limited student access to critical information.

"[Technology] has become not just a luxury but actually a day-to-day, hour-to-hour, minute-to-minute requirement for us to really function well as a middle school in the 21st Century," said Chris Hindes, Principal at Lamoille Union Middle School. Yet the remote location of the district limited its options for Internet providers, making it challenging to find the needed speeds and reliability. Plus, no existing central data center serviced all locations.

FairPoint Solution

Today, teachers and students at Lamoille North Supervisory Union connect approximately 1,000 times a day via mobile devices and laptops – just on the wireless network alone. The district's high-speed connectivity is made possible with business-class Ethernet Dedicated Internet Access (EDIA) from FairPoint Communications, giving the district a 500 Mbps line.

In fact, since April 2008, FairPoint has invested more than one million dollars per week in its communications infrastructure, technology and services in northern New England in an effort to expand and upgrade its network to enable these connections.

FairPoint also gives the Lamoille school district a voice package that replicates the functionality of an on-site Private Branch eXchange (PBX) – without the costs or challenges of having to install and maintain an on-site, customer-owned phone system. FairPoint's Hosted PBX is a Voice over IP (VoIP) solution with a powerful, dedicated, feature-rich voice and data connection.

Now, Lamoille North has one trusted source for its telecommunications needs. Teachers and students enjoy continuous, reliable and fast Internet access and data transfer capabilities. Teachers use iPads and Smart Boards to guide their classes through lessons or connect instantly with professional learning communities and fellow staff at other locations.

"It has revolutionized the way we do things," said Robin Gouin, Technology & Support, Lamoille Union High School.

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Students use both computers and iPads on campus to complete assignments, create works of art and connect with other students across the school district and around the globe with tools like Skype, FaceTime and GoToMeeting. In addition, each student now has an email address that includes online backup and storage.

Benefits

A more connected school district has changed the way teachers teach and students learn at Lamoille. Many teachers leverage the Haiku Learning Management System, an online portal where teachers and students share information. It facilitates a more collaborative learning experience and gets students accustomed to the type of online interaction they'll likely experience in college and the workplace.

"Several of my classes are now using this website," said Nathan LaGue, a senior at Lamoille North High School. "Teachers can upload documents and students can do different assignments online and turn in assignments online...It gives us easier, constant access to online resources, which are a really important part of today's learning."

The speed of the network supports students in starting and completing projects during class time. For an assignment to create a children's book, students found photos and resources online and also submitted their complete projects online.

"It's lightning fast," said Melissa Chase, freshman. "The project is due at the end of class and it's very easy to get it done."

Several high school students are now involved in a literacy service project where they read and discuss books weekly with children in Santa Fe using Skype and FaceTime – connections only possible with reliable Internet. At the Green Mountain Technology and Career Center, also operated by the district, the high-speed network is heavily leveraged by students enrolled in technology-focused programs such as computer networking, and multimedia and design. For the Technology & Support group serving the district, a faster Internet connection means they can now use their phones to troubleshoot help desk tickets.

Fast connectivity also supports students outside school hours by giving them access to online district databases. With FairPoint's extensive network throughout the community, many students also now have access at home.

Everything is faster," said Meagan Towle, Technology Services Library Assistant, Lamoille High School. "We've seen a lot more use of online databases that we subscribe to. The great thing about it is the kids can go home and access their databases. The Internet is a big part of that. We introduce them to the databases at school and then they can go home and use them."

As Lamoille moves ahead with more technology initiatives, it can depend on reliable, fast Internet service to power those enhancements now and in the future.

For More Information

FairPoint helps organizations like yours increase their network capacity to accomplish online testing goals, support more electronic learning devices in the classroom, connect multiple campus locations and, ultimately, enhance education in our shared community while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

For more information, please contact your account manager.