ILLINOIS DISTRICT LEVERAGES BYOD, INDIVIDUALIZES EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATES IN OTHER LEADING-EDGE INITIATIVES

CLIENT PROFILE

The Bloomington (Illinois) Public Schools District 87 serves 5,600 PreK-12 students from 10 facilities with 725 teachers and staff. A diverse district, Bloomington's students speak 23 non-English languages.

SITUATION

Like many public school districts, Bloomington is challenged to give its students a 21st Century education while meeting state and federal mandates in a difficult fiscal climate. To do so, Bloomington sought to implement a device-agnostic one-to-one computing strategy. Key to the strategy was leveraging BYOD innovatively, as a means to preserve resources, thereby enabling the district to supply its diverse student population with mobile devices.

However, the district's legacy Cisco wireless network provided inadequate coverage to meet changing demands, was exceptionally complex and required excessive IT resources to manage. When licensing issues with the legacy system surfaced, Bloomington decided it needed a new end-to-end solution.

SOLUTION

To meet instructional and technology goals within its budget, Bloomington required a manageable system that was also robust, affordable, reliable and secure. After carefully evaluating solutions, the district selected an Aruba Networks solution for its range of capabilities, flexibility, intelligence and security features.

"We wanted a solution from a reputable vendor that was forward-looking in terms of technology, solid from an implementation standpoint and hands-off to manage," says Jim Peterson, Technology Director at Bloomington. "When we asked our peers at other institutions, they told us that they installed Aruba and it just worked."

Another important consideration for selecting Aruba was exceptional post-sale support. "It's our philosophy to trust people," explains Bloomington's Systems Administrator Jason Radford. "We judge companies, – large and small – by the representation we receive from sales, implementation and technical support staff. Aruba Networks really made us feel comfortable."

BUSINESS SITUATION:

Bloomington needed a robust, affordable, manageable, reliable and secure wireless network to achieve 21st Century educational goals.

SOLUTION:

Aruba Networks Wireless WLAN:

- Approximately 300 Access Points
- AP models AP105
- Controller Model 6000 Series
- AirWave Management System

BENEFITS:

- Take an Innovative BYOD Approach to Establishing 1:1 Computing.
- Provide 21st Century Teaching and Learning Tools.
- Individualize Education Effectively to Improve Success.
- Participate in IlliniCloud, Shared Learning Collaborative (SLC) and Other Initiatives.
- Meet State and Federal Mandates Efficiently.

"We need to focus our energies on the classroom rather than managing complex wireless infrastructure. Aruba not only reduces complexity, it just plain works."

– Jim Peterson,
Technology Director,
Bloomington (Illinois) Public Schools
District 87

BENEFITS

Bloomington successfully deployed 300 access points by relying on Aruba's Aruba Adaptive Radio Management™ (ARM) technology and AirWave® software. "Due to the rapidly-evolving nature of wireless, forecasting our future density needs was challenging," says Radford.

"So," he continues, "we densely deployed Aruba AP105 access points and AirWave intelligently manages them. That's proven really successful."

By blanketing its 10 facilities with an Aruba solution, Bloomington is able to:

Take an Innovative BYOD Approach to Establishing 1:1 Computing. Due to Aruba's capabilities to flexibly and securely manage access rights, Bloomington is innovatively reducing costs by implementing a BYOD policy for teachers and students to compliment school-issued notebooks, netbooks, tablets and e-readers to establish 1:1 computing district-wide.

Provide 21st Century Teaching and Learning Tools. Leveraging an Aruba WLAN as its networking infrastructure is enabling Bloomington to develop new teaching and learning resources. This includes a personalized learning environment with collaboration tools, curriculum development aids, visual textbooks and integrated file management.

Individualize Education Effectively to Improve Success. Utilizing Aruba for wireless access permits teachers to employ new methods to efficiently individualized education. One such tool allows for tracking each student's progress and then differentiating instruction to meet each person's unique needs.

Participate in IlliniCloud, Shared Learning Collaborative (SLC) and Other Initiatives. Enabling district-wide wireless access via its Aruba solution ensures Bloomington can leverage resources provided by initiatives such as the regionally-developed IlliniCloud and the national Shared Learning Collaborative (SLC), a project of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Meet State and Federal Mandates Efficiently. Implementing a robust Aruba infrastructure enables Bloomington to meet assessment requirements efficiently by utilizing tools such as the Discovery Education Assessment and fulfill participation obligations such as PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness of College and Careers).

Regardless which educational goal Bloomington seeks to achieve, ubiquitous wireless access makes it possible. "We couldn't do any of it without our robust, reliable Aruba network," Peterson says.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Country or Region
United States

Industry
K-12 Education

Client Profile
Bloomington (Illinois) Public Schools District 87 serves 5,600 PreK-12 students from 10 facilities with 725 teachers and staff.

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