

Ridley School District

Innovation and technology investment built a complete network to prepare students for life, college and career paths

“Working with Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise has enabled Ridley to build a highway for the future of education.”

Don Otto, Director of Technology, Ridley School District

While expanding its 1:1 device learning initiative, Ridley School District, in southeastern Pennsylvania, quickly discovered the increase in device connectivity required a network evolution. An investment would enhance the wireless and data network with Alcatel-Lucent solutions and address the needs of 1:1 learning, including advanced application use for digital learning, and greater network capacity.

A leader in innovation, Ridley’s head of IT, Don Otto, has championed many initiatives for advances in technology and learning. In 2019, he received the IT Vanguard award for his part in the “Center for Connected Education”, a district curriculum initiative built to expand students’ understanding and interest in IT and the networking industry.

CHALLENGES

Meeting technology needs of a district serving over 6,000 users has ongoing challenges. Ridley, which strives to innovate through advanced technology, uncovered unique challenges. One challenge to offer personalized learning was stymied by connectivity and limited throughput rates on the wireless network, which became overloaded with the increase of devices and cloud apps being used. They also discovered the network looked like the wild west with over 11 different SSIDs enabling connectivity on the network, leaving it vulnerable to threats. The district’s network video recorders and phones were on a separate network, and they wanted to move to IP cameras.

ACTION

Ridley’s IT staff worked with the broader ALE team and long-time business partner RFP to address each of the challenges. To add redundancy, OmniSwitch 6860s were placed at the edge delivering link aggregation that syncs to the network even when the internet is down. To keep the network safe and better manage devices, Ridley maximized User Network Profile settings, assigning roles as devices came on the network and limiting access where needed. A district wide Emergency Notification System was also created to trigger alerts for weather situations and for use in a crisis.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Alcatel-Lucent OmniSwitch® 6900-X72
Alcatel-Lucent OmniSwitch® 6860
Alcatel-Lucent OmniSwitch® 6450
Alcatel-Lucent OmniVista® 2500 Network Management System
Alcatel-Lucent Emergency Notification System

RESULTS

Technical Benefits

- Role-based, automated network access connects teachers, students and guests without help of IT and reduces the number of SSIDs
- Reserve bandwidth for teaching apps
- Fully redundant data centers with high capacity address the increase demand from 1:1 learning, personalized learning and more cloud-based services
- User Network Profile made it easier for IT to manage school devices and staff/students’ personal devices

Financial Benefits

- Use of eRate funding and competitive procurement assured an affordable solution
- IT Staff manages network from a central location rather than running to each campus
- One network for all uses: replacing legacy coax network for cameras with IP camera

User Experience Benefits

- Teachers no longer worry about network reliability when trying new education apps or using the large database of videos
- Secure connection of devices like Apple TV and LAN probes enhanced the activities in classrooms and labs.
- Livestream content enabled from any network port

WHAT’S NEXT FOR RIDLEY?

Ridley School District is running Alcatel-Lucent Rainbow as a proof of concept not just for business continuity but also as a safety tool to communicate during a crisis.

Ridley is also actively incorporating their ALE networking into a curriculum-based program to teach basic IT skills in the Center for Connected Education.

Customer Story

MARKET: EDUCATION	COUNTRY: UNITED STATES	COMPANY:
DEAL IMPLEMENTED: JUNE 2019	NUMBER OF USERS: 6000+	RIDLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT