

CASE STUDY:

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Provide Tech-Savvy Classrooms for students

BRINGING TECHNOLOGY TO THE CLASSROOM

BACKGROUND

Located in Charlotte, North Carolina, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) is the second largest school district in the state and the 18th largest in the U.S. CMS's mission is to provide academic instruction, rigor, and support to more than 146,000 K-12 students in 168 schools throughout the cities and towns of Mecklenburg County.

In 2014, as part of its mission to maximize academic achievement, CMS initiated its Strategic Plan 2018: For a Better Tomorrow. The plan consists of six goals, including a goal of preparing students to be leaders in a technologically savvy and globally competitive world. Familiarity with technology is an essential part of preparing students for life after high school, whether that means attending college, starting a career, or joining the military.

Part of the Strategic Plan 2018 includes bringing digital learning to all students by 2018 and to have a 1:1 ratio of students to digital devices. This means that every student will have access to a digital device (laptop, tablet, or other e-learning device) at school.

In 2014, CMS began equipping each of its 30,000 middle school students in 30 different schools with a Chromebook™ laptop. In 2015, grades 5, 9, and 10 were added. Plans are in place for the continued roll-out of digital devices to all grade levels up through 2018.

Chief Technology, Personalized Learning, and Engagement Officer Valerie Truesdale stated, "The first step was the conversion to digital learning at all middle schools. We chose middle schools for several reasons. First, we had an investment in digital tech books and needed devices to support middle school science and social studies classes. Providing mobile learning devices helps personalize learning. CMS also nurtures teacher skills in instructional technology by providing professional development facilitators at each middle school."

Research has shown that middle-grade students can experience a loss of proficiency when they leave elementary school. Therefore, CMS has used technology to address these challenges by engaging middle school students and providing opportunities for extended learning.

CLIENT:
CHARLOTTE
MECKLENBURG
SCHOOL DISTRICT

INDUSTRY:
K-12 EDUCATION

REGION:
NORTH CAROLINA,
UNITED STATES

WEBSITE:
CMS.K12.NC.US

SOLUTION:
BEST-IN-CLASS MOBILE
DEVICE STORAGE AND
CHARGING SOLUTIONS



CHALLENGE: HOW TO MANAGE DIGITAL DEVICES

Students at CMS don't take their laptops home. The students usually pick up the devices at the beginning of school day and return them for recharging at the end of the day. The technology personnel at CMS needed a solution for storing the laptops safely and securely in every classroom and to have them readily accessible to students.

With such a large investment in technology, the team at CMS decided to use charging carts to charge, store, and secure their e-learning devices. After evaluating a wide array of options, CMS turned to Black Box, a Pittsburgh, PA-based supplier of technology product solutions, for a charging and storage solution.

"We chose Black Box Charging Carts because of a combination of factors: high quality, competitive pricing, lifetime warranty, and the ability to deliver a large quantity of carts in a very short time – six weeks," said Cedrick Canty, Assistant Director in the Office of Information Systems and Support at CMS. "Black Box provided us with the best value: a high-quality, well-built charging cart that is extremely affordable. It meets our needs for storage, charging, security, and safety."

RESULT: 1,300 CARTS IN 6 WEEKS, PLUS 500 MORE

Black Box kept its commitment to CMS's quick turnaround schedule. Black Box worked hand-in-hand with Applied Data Technologies (ADT) for procurement management, configuration, and deployment services for the carts.

Black Box delivered 1,300 standard charging carts in June and July, and then another 500 carts during the school year.

"We consider Black Box a key vendor partner. They delivered more than 1,300 carts in less than six weeks with zero defects," said Will Howey, Deployment Manager at Applied Data Technologies. Canty added, "Every charging cart was delivered on time and in mint condition."

The ADT team also prepared the charging carts to support CMS needs. "The cable management system on the carts allowed us to wire each cart in under 30 minutes," added Howey. "From my experience, that's two to three times faster than other cart manufacturers."

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CEDRICK CANTY, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OFFICE OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT CHARLOTTE- MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS

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WILL HOWEY, DEPLOYMENT MANAGER APPLIED DATA TECHNOLOGIES