Manitou Springs School District Takes Learning Mobile with AirWatch

The Challenge

In the twenty-first century classroom, students are utilizing new technologies to learn, communicate and develop scholastic relationships. As technology redefines classroom instruction, educators must find creative ways to reach the modern day learner and to empower teachers to develop instructional techniques that are not limited to the traditional classroom.

As one of the first school districts in the United States to embrace mobility in the classroom, educators at Manitou Springs School District 14 turned to AirWatch® to secure devices and deploy curriculum content to their large student body.

The Client

Manitou Springs School District 14 serves four schools and approximately 1,500 students, from pre-kindergarten to grade 12, who reside in the communities of Manitou Springs, Cascade, Green Mountain Falls, Chipita Park, Cystal Park, and Cedar Heights, Colorado. Manitou Springs, or MSSD 14, offers a small town educational environment and is driven by the motto, "Relationships, Rigor, and Opportunity."

Manitou Springs School District 14 was named an Apple Distinguished Program for the 2012-2013 school year for its 1:1 iPad implementation. This distinction highlights the school's success in enhancing and extending teaching and learning with thoughtful and innovative technology implementations. Incorporating tablets into the classroom has encouraged teachers to break away from traditional teacher-led instruction and utilize technology to increase student engagement that leads to a more active and meaningful student experience.

Educators at MSSD 14 began exploring mobile devices as learning tools two years ago, when the need for increased technology became apparent. Teachers and students were clamoring for access to...
technology to support e-learning activities in their classrooms, and
the school ran out of IP addresses. Cathrine Butler-Olimb, the district’s
technology coordinator, purchased a small number of tablets and
put them into the hands of a pilot group of teachers and students.
“The use of the iPad provided invaluable insight into how the
devices enabled learning to be more engaging and mobile for this
small group of students,” she says. “Students had access to apps
that allowed them to interact with curriculum in an innovative,
personalized way, essentially extending the school day until well
after the last bell rang.”

The Solution
After a successful pilot program, the Manitou leadership team took
the next step in the schools’ mobility strategy and purchased 1,100
tablets to create a 1:1 device to student ratio for children in grades
5-12. Butler-Olimb’s top priority was security. “We wanted to control
access to the Internet and turn Safari on and off as needed. We also
wanted different levels of access for a variety of age groups. With
AirWatch, I know where all my devices are and who they are assigned
to. The ability to easily move students into different groups as
needed is very helpful,” says Butler-Olimb.

Prior to selecting AirWatch, MSSD 14 evaluated a number of EMM
vendors. “We used Apple MDM for a short time,” says Butler-Olimb.
“We would turn Safari off every evening and provide students with
a secure browser. However, we did not feel this was secure enough –
I was very excited when iOS 6 came out and we could install Global
Proxies on all the student iPads. Our school must remain complaint
with the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), and with
AirWatch’s user-specific profiles, GPS can be turned off on devices so
that no child is being tracked.”

Up next: MSSD 14 already uses AirWatch to push out free apps and
send messages about upcoming events directly to student’s devices.
“The ability to use tablets to communicate with students will
become more and more important,” says Butler-Olimb. “AirWatch
helps us use technology as a learning tool, while keeping the
school a safe place for our students and staff.”

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– Cathrine Butler-Olimb
District Technology
Coordinator, MSSD14