Lee's Summit R-7 School District

Impact portraits: Success stories with Google for Education

Lee's Summit R-7 School District (R-7) in metropolitan Kansas City is one of the top educational systems in Missouri and the country. The district has grown steadily since 1990, averaging almost 350 new students per year. To increase personalized learning and create a new educational future, R-7 launched Connect2Learn—a program that gives a Chromebook to every student in grades K–12. Connect2Learn, built on Google Workspace technology, is used to transform how students are traditionally taught.

District facts (Public school district)

Total district enrollment

17,980 Students
1,380 Teachers

Grades served

Pre-K>12

Number of schools

28 Total (3 High schools, 1 Technology academy, 3 Middle schools, 18 Elementary schools, 1 Preschool, 2 Alternative centers)

Google tools

17,980 Chromebooks
5 years using Chromebooks
6 years using Google Workspace for Education
48,000 Students using Google Workspace for Education

Free/reduced price lunch

19.4% of students qualify

Google Workspace for Education tools used

Why Chromebooks

- Chromebooks and Google Workspace help allow the district to restructure the curriculum based on personalized learning.

- By giving Chromebooks to all students, the district created a level playing field where all students have computer access at school and at home.

- With the support of Chromebooks, Connect2Learn continues to create deeper, more personalized, and more innovative learning experiences.

- The district continues to work with ISP's and families to discover low cost internet options.

- With Google Hangouts, students can participate on assignments and collaborate with classmates even when they're home sick.

- Data binders, created in Google Sheets, help students track their progress.

- Students in several schools use Google Slides to create presentations evaluating their class progress.
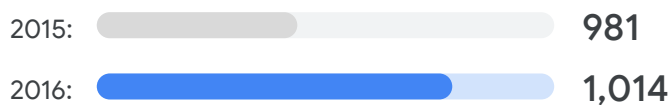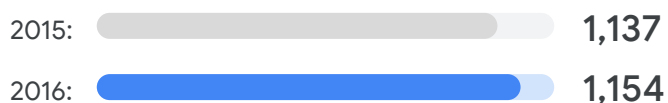
Results

On top of the growth in their CASE Technology scores, R-7 has seen a change in the way they teach. "That starts with our commitment to 1:1 for K–12," said Director of Instructional Technology Dr. Kevin Whaley, "we didn't think just the high schools, and we didn't think the middle schools. We went ahead and committed across the board for all of our kids." Along with student and teacher excitement for Chromebooks and Google Workspace, the community has responded well to the new technology. Local businesses have offered support and parents are just as enthusiastic about the changes.

BrightBytes CASE scores1 lift after going 1:1[1]. Measured on a scale of 800–1,300
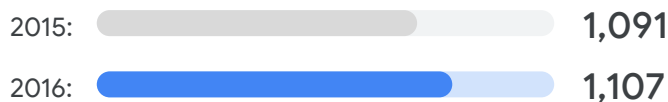
Classroom

2015: 981

2016: 1,014

Skills

2015: 1,137

2016: 1,154

Access

2015: 1,195

2016: 1,233

Environment

2015: 1,091

2016: 1,107

Before scores taken May 1, 2015. After scores taken May 1, 2016.

Launching technology for all students

In 2015, Connect2Learn distributed 17,500 Chromebooks to all students, from kindergarten through twelfth grade. The program created a level playing field, regardless of family income, by offering computer access to everyone both in school and at home. "Equality is not equity," said Whaley, "There's not a one-size-fits-all for every kid. We have to meet each kid where they are." R-7 aimed to improve learning by encouraging personalized and deeper experiences, innovative programs, and more student-led vs. teacher-centered lessons. Dr. Kevin Daniel, R-7 Associate Superintendent of Instruction and Leadership, reports that "Connect2Learn is raising the level of student engagement [and] raising the level of critical thinking."

Since all students were given Chromebooks, district leaders went a step further to ensure students also had internet access outside of school. The Connect2Learn website maintains a map of businesses that support R-7 students by offering free internet hotspots. The district also worked with nonprofits to make sure families have access to affordable internet service at home.

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>
> Dr. Kevin Whaley,,
> Director of Instructional Technology

Not missing out at home

With Google Workspace and Chromebooks, students can participate in class even when they are at home. For example, a middle-school science class challenged students to learn about the planets by working in teams to create "vacation packages" to their assigned planet. Students created storyboards and scripts to eventually film commercials. Unfortunately, two students were home sick during key phases of the project. With the help of Google Hangouts, the students could still collaborate— even edit storyboards and record video—with their teammates from home.

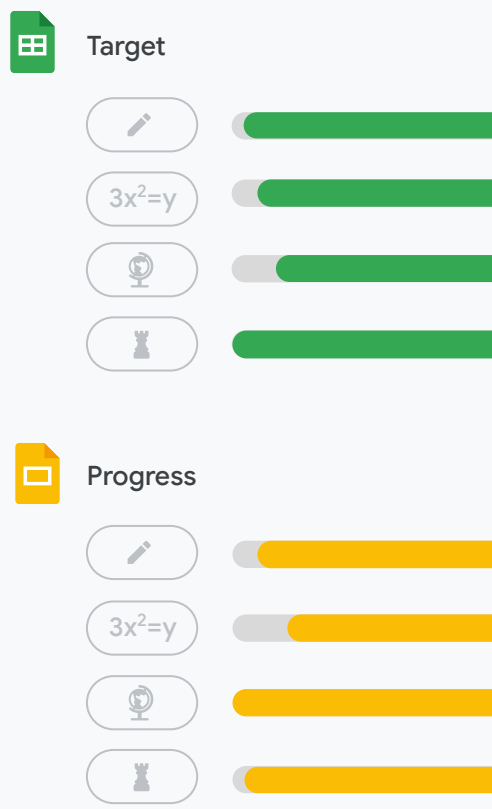of R-7 students with home internet access thanks to Connect2Learn

90%

Students track their own growth

In some 2nd grade classrooms, students track their learning targets with data binders created with Google Sheets. Students track everything from Reading logs to Math facts, giving them more hands-on ownership of their educations. These data binders can be thought of as more advanced and thorough versions of traditional reading logs. When students complete a project in their data binder, they share the URL with classmates, teachers, and parents. This keeps everyone up-to-date on a student's progress in real time. R-7 reports that the data binders themselves are changing the way students view school.

Encouraged by the success of student data binders, other schools have developed a culture of student- led conferences using Google Slides. Starting in elementary school, students create and share twelve- slide presentations about their progress annually. They pull some materials from their data binders and add slides on their strengths, weaknesses, and progress. The last slide gives students the opportunity to thank anyone who has helped them grow during that year. Teachers encourage these presentations to be creative and make the most of the students' digital skills. Through these examples of personalized learning, students, parents, and teachers all stay informed and invested in the student's growth.

Students track their learning targets with data binders create slides on their strengths, weaknesses, and progress

Target

Progress

Conclusion

R-7 School District understood the importance of getting technology into the hands of their students. With Chromebooks, Google Workspace, and a connectivity for all students, R-7 leveled the tech playing field, giving their students the chance to engage and excel. The district continues to push their goal of equity and, thanks to Google technology, every child gets the same educational tools and support for success.