

Oshkosh Area School District

Impact portraits: Success stories with Google for Education

When first deciding how to upgrade their technology and digital offerings, the Oshkosh Area School District got the message from their community loud and clear: They wanted equality of technology resources for schools across the district. The district came back with a proposal to deploy Google Workspace for Education and Chromebooks, first rolled out to teachers, then to high school students and beyond. Students would have the power to collaborate and design their own plans of study, while teachers could approach traditional subjects with more modern methods and context. Together, it made for an increase in excitement among students—and a significant improvement in academic outcomes among classes that implemented the new programs.

District facts (Public school district)



Total district enrollment

10,000 Students
851 Teachers



Grades served

Pre K>12



Free/reduced price lunch

43% of students qualify



Number of schools

26 Total (15 Elementary schools, 5 Middle schools, 2 High schools, 4 Charter schools)



Google tools

7,950 Chromebooks
3 years using Chromebooks
5 years using Google Workspace for Education
100% Students using Google Workspace for Education



Ethnicity

81% White
7% Asian
5% Hispanic/Latino
4% Two or more races
3% Black/African American



Why Chromebooks

Oshkosh's students have more voice and choice, while both teachers and students are accountable to academic standards.

Chromebooks help students access materials at the level they want each day, leading to better behavior and higher grades.

With regular access to Chromebooks, teachers redesigned classes to enable students to learn reading, writing and speaking through personalized research, projects, and presentations on topics of their choice.

Results

Oshkosh's embrace of Chromebooks and Google Workspace for Education led to improved student outcomes. The improvements are supported by data that's presented to the community twice a year (and will soon be available via a real-time dashboard). In 2014–2015 World Literature classes using traditional instructional methods, 42 out of 56 students (75%) passed, while 40 of 49 (82%) students passed traditional English classes. In classes using new instructional methods, 78 out of 83 students (94%) passed World Literature and 64 of 66 (97%) students passed the updated English courses.

“When students have choices, the culture in my classroom changes. Students want to be here and to learn, which results in a better climate and higher scores,” says Malary Hill, an English teacher at West High School. As David Gundlach, Deputy Superintendent at the Oshkosh Area School District, explains, “combining Google Workspace for Education with Chromebooks gave us a truly seamless, efficient, effective, and innovative learning system that supports our personalized learning environment. There is no way we could do this without using Chromebooks and Google Workspace for Education.”



2014–2015 World Literature classes

75% of students passed using traditional instructional methods

42 out of 56 students

94% of students passed using new instructional methods

78 out of 83 students



2014–2015 English classes

82% of students passed using traditional instructional methods

40 out of 49 students

97% of students passed using new instructional methods

64 out of 66 students



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David Gundlach,
Deputy Superintendent



238 devices per support person in 2010

1,200 devices per support person in 2016

2,700 devices per support person in 2018 (anticipated)

Implementing technology

Oshkosh Area School District leaders understood their community wanted all of their students to get access to technology in their schools. “Instead of telling the community what they needed, we listened to what they told us. What they wanted was more technology and equitable resources for all,” says Gundlach. “Everyone wanted to prepare students for the 21st century workplace, focusing on the 4Cs of critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. We’re trying to prepare them for a future that doesn’t exist yet.”

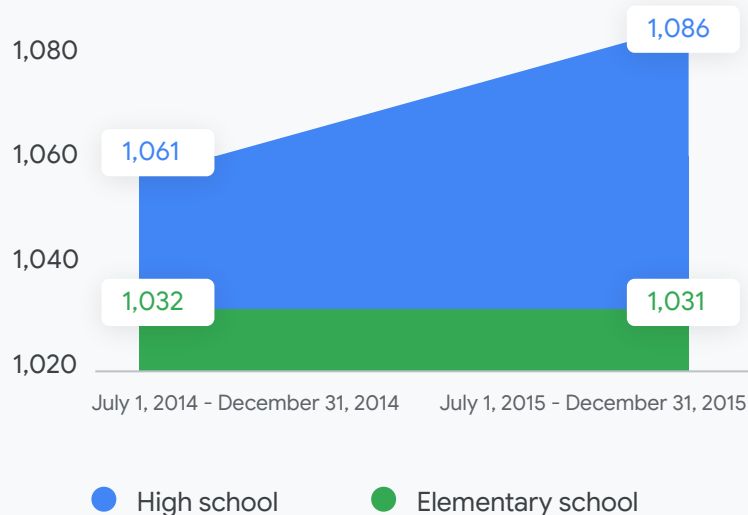


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The solution became Oshkosh’s “Learning Without Limits” initiative, a four-phase plan that included rollouts of Google Workspace for Education and Chromebooks for students grades 3 through 12. The community was especially eager to implement personalized learning, emphasizing mastery and efficiency for students, for which the school applied for and received a \$15,000 Teacher Impact Grant from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) as part of the Teach to Lead program, one of only seven to be fully funded in the nation.

CASETM proficiency scores higher with Chromebooks: The high school implemented Chromebooks but the elementary school did not



Evolving biology

With evenly distributed access to technology, Oshkosh's students have more voice and choice, while both teachers and students are accountable to academic standards using surveys like BrightBytes to track implementation of the 4Cs. For example, two biology teachers switched the focus of their classrooms to build on the scientific method with an inquiry process mimicking a popular reality television series. In the series, participants must survive after being placed in a remote location with few resources. Oshkosh students randomly selected a desolate location they researched in order to "survive." Using Google Maps to understand their location, they research natural threats and possible resources, then create a survival plan they present to the class. The entire process— inquiry-based, collaborative, and with authentic products presented for assessment—would be difficult without the technology, according to Erin Kohl, Principal of West High School. "Chromebooks help students take ownership of their education. Accessing materials at the level they want each day dials them into the classroom experience, leading to better behavior and higher grades."

A new type of English

Two West High School English teachers, Alexandra Griffith and Malary Hill, use Chromebooks and Google Workspace for Education to personalize learning in their classrooms. When asked, many students felt their classes didn't reflect their passions and they had few opportunities to pursue their interests. With regular access to Chromebooks, teachers redesigned classes

to enable students to learn reading, writing and speaking through personalized research, projects, and presentations on topics of their choice. Students now progress through the class at an individual pace, allowing high achieving students to move ahead and other students to work through material more carefully.

Joining the global academy

Among one of the most inspirational examples of the success of Learning Without Limits is the Global Academy, a magnet program within West High School. The Academy's 60 students meet in dismantled computer labs to work with teachers who combine English, History, and Spanish. The students create work representative of all three subjects, collaborating to research and present their findings in Google Slides and videos. "This is an authentic experience that couldn't be done without technology. It creates the difference between teaching about global awareness and teaching through global awareness," says Instructional Support Specialist Kristi Levy. According to Kohl, all teachers in the high school now have flexibility with curriculum and use Google Workspace for Education and Chromebooks to increase voice and choice. The best part? The idea and execution for the Global Academy came from the High School, not the district itself. "We believe increasing student engagement turns into increasing student achievement," says Gundlach.

