

North Country School Increases Collaboration and Brings Learning Into the 21st Century with Google Chromebooks for Education



About North Country School

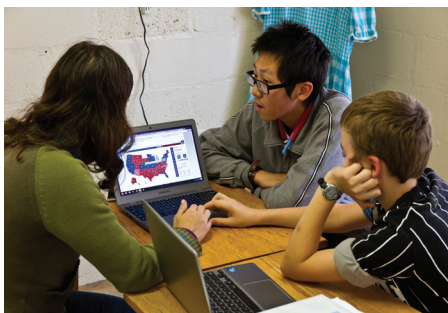
- Google Apps for Education user since 2008
- Google Chromebooks for Education user since 2011
- Implementing 40 Chromebooks for 90 students in 2012 school year

Goals

- Modernize technology resources and provide students with access to the Web in the classroom as well as better collaboration tools
- Find a cost effective solution that was easy for young students to use, required little maintenance, and didn't have a lot of unnecessary bells and whistles

Approach

- Purchased 40 Chromebooks for students to use everywhere, from the classroom to the barn, connecting students to the Web and to a world of engaging educational apps



Institution

Located in the Adirondacks in Lake Placid, New York, North Country School is a small co-ed boarding and day school for children in grades four through nine. With a unique focus on sustainability, the school features a 200-acre campus with a working farm, extensive gardens, and an abundance of alpine wilderness that provide hands-on opportunities for learning, work and growth.

Challenge

Until just a few years ago, technology was at arm's length for North Country School's 90 students. Joel Lowsky, Director of Information Technology, and other school administrators, knew they needed to update their technology and modernize for the sake of their students. They also wanted to make it easier for students and faculty to collaborate on projects. As with many schools, North Country School was working with a tight budget.

Additionally, North Country School discovered that 90 to 95 percent of their students' computer activity was searching the Web or typing papers. The school didn't need a lot of complex applications and felt that spending money on software they wouldn't use would be a waste. What they needed was a streamlined device that middle school students could use every day with little to no maintenance.

"If teachers don't have to spend time helping students figure out their computers, they are doing more teaching, and there is more learning going on in the classroom. That's what matters the most to us."

—Joel Lowsky, Director of Information Technology, North Country School

Solution

In 2011, North Country School purchased a small number of Google Chromebooks for Education – an intuitive and easy-to-manage alternative to traditional PCs. For the 2012–2013 school year, North Country School will have 40 devices, or three machines for every four kids. "Google Chromebooks are the perfect computing tool for young students who often have short attention spans," says Lowsky. "They boot up in eight seconds, have customizable desktops for each user, and require very little instruction. Most importantly, they connect students to a world of helpful learning apps. Chromebooks brought our school up-to-date and created a cultural shift in how we use technology."

The price also aced the test. After looking at a few different technology options, North Country School officials realized they could afford twice as many Chromebooks as iPads or Macbooks with the same budget. Forty Chromebooks would have a significantly bigger impact on students than 20 Macbooks or PCs.

Chromebooks for Education

- Chromebook devices
- Web-based management console
- 24/7 support from Google
- Limited hardware warranty

Google's Chromebook laptops provide fast, affordable, and easy-to-manage computing that allows students to learn anytime, anywhere by accessing the vast resources of the web.

For more information, visit:
www.chromebooks.com/edu



Benefits

Collaboration has become one of North Country School's favorite features of Chromebooks. In the past, North Country School students working together on a project would have to share a computer or email documents back and forth with one classmate making all of the edits in a final version. Now, with more devices in the classroom, students are able to work together on projects with more Chromebooks available to them. With Google Apps for Education, a suite of Web-based productivity tools, they are able to collaborate in a shared document, all at the same time. It has transformed the way students collaborate on school projects.

Chromebooks and Google Apps help North Country School teachers as well by giving them tools to be more involved in student projects throughout the entire process. "With Google Apps, our teachers can proofread students' papers at any time. They can also open a Doc, watch their students type, and provide comments and feedback along the way. It's all about immediate feedback," says Lowsky.

In addition to the classroom work, North Country School has a farm-based learning program where students raise sheep and make maple syrup. "We added Internet access to the school's barn a few years ago, and this year, we plan to have our students take Chromebooks to the barn when the sheep are giving birth to baby lambs in the spring. For each lamb born, students will be able to work together to record important information, including height, weight, length, color, and more in a Google Doc and share that information more broadly with everyone in the school. This is just another example of how Chromebooks and Google Apps will help students work together," says Lowsky.

North Country School plans to purchase additional Google Chromebooks for the 2013 school year so that each student will have a personal device. "Chromebooks for Education is opening doors for our students that aren't open at a lot of other schools," says Lowsky. "We're excited about how this is changing the way our students work together. The possibilities are endless."

Results

Google Chromebooks for Education brought North Country School up-to-date with technology and created unprecedented opportunities for students and faculty. More importantly, Chromebooks working with Apps for Education transformed the way students and teachers collaborate on school projects.

