

In the charter school system classrooms, they now have the technology advantages they need to close the achievement gap.

## Charter School System

How an urban charter school system helped disadvantaged students succeed

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### ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

An East Coast urban charter school system began in the late '90s with the mission to close the achievement gap and prepare low-income students to graduate from college. With 49 college prep schools today in three states, the growing charter school system continues to demonstrate outstanding student academic performance and improvement.

Technology is a big part of this charter school system's success in mitigating the effects of being a student that is living in poverty. To sustain this success, the charter school system creates and continually fine-tunes its systems to help its teachers teach and its students learn. That's no small feat with more than 13,000 students, 1,200 teachers, three headquarter locations and 100 administrative and management personnel in the system — and growing.

### CHALLENGE

- **IT staff couldn't handle the growing charter school system**
- **A third-party IT provider brought more problems than solutions**
- **Lack of coordination and slow installation of IT systems threatened new school openings**
- **Slow response for break-fix calls**

Technology is instrumental to this urban charter school system's success because it helps mitigate the effects of being a student living with limited means. When the school system grew to 14 schools with just a handful of internal IT staff, they sought an outsourced IT partner to manage current and future challenges as it continued to grow.

They found a third-party IT provider, but quickly learned that the provider was better suited to smaller organizations with one or two schools — not a growing system of charter schools. Summer was especially trying, as the provider scrambled to install IT infrastructure, workstations, networks and cabling in time to open new locations. There was no coordinated effort with the system's facilities management teams, which delayed launch objectives. In addition, the IT partner didn't have a fully staffed help desk, which slowed technician response when issues arose.

The charter school system decided they needed a new IT partner that could help them on their journey to excellence and continued growth — a partner with the insight to guide product selection, program management, budget planning and facilities coordination so goals could be met on time, every time.

# Case Study

**RICOH**  
imagine. change.

The charter school system now has a high performance, reliable and cost-effective IT infrastructure.

## RESULTS

- **Reduced infrastructure and hardware costs**
- **Internal IT staff freed from all-consuming IT support tasks**
- **Brought innovation to the processes of teaching and learning**
- **Access to the right tools and technology to prepare students to graduate**

For more than eight years, Ricoh has been providing expert guidance and IT support to the charter school system as it grows to more than 60 schools by 2020. The school system now has a high performance, reliable and cost-effective IT infrastructure. Its internal IT team has been freed from tasks like maintenance, break-fix, help desk, IT deployment, data protection, security and onboarding new locations. In turn, school administrators are able to direct more of their attention to strategy.

With tailored applications not available in off-the-shelf solutions, school system administrators rely on Ricoh to bring even more innovation to the processes of teaching and learning. And while its students are economically disadvantaged, the schools now have the technology advantages they need to close the achievement gap and prepare students to attend college

## HOW WE DID IT

- **Implemented a high-performance, reliable and cost-effective infrastructure**
- **Brought in a program manager who established a process and enlisted industry best practices**
- **Developed a custom intranet curriculum management application**
- **Migrated to Microsoft® Office 365™**

Ricoh brought in a program manager to oversee the new location launches, establish a process and use industry best practices to smoothly deploy technology every time a new school opened. We also transitioned the charter school system to a cloud infrastructure — with servers co-located or hosted at a Ricoh datacenter — and provided internet access and WAN services for all schools, onsite and remote support for all technology and remote backup of services and workstations.

All totaled, Ricoh is managing and supporting more than 5,000 Chromebooks™, 2,300 staff workstations, 2,200 student workstations, 1,000-plus mobile devices and approximately 1,300 wireless access points to help ensure reliable connectivity. After stabilizing the IT infrastructure for the charter school system, new needs emerged as they continued to grow and add more schools.

We developed a custom intranet curriculum management application based on Microsoft® SharePoint™ to enable teachers to search for information based on curriculum subjects and grade level. We also migrated the charter school system to Microsoft® Office 365™ when its existing server infrastructure reached end-of-life to reduce infrastructure and hardware costs, add storage capacity and improve hardware replacement lifecycle.

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