

State Partnership Helps Prince William County Public Schools Access Reliable Internet



Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) has 95 schools, over 10,000 employees, and almost 90,000 students. It is the second largest school district in Virginia and the 36th largest in the nation.



The Problem

PWCS recently increased their bandwidth from 1 Gbps to 2 Gbps, but that was still not enough to accommodate the growing technology demands of their large faculty and student population. They were constantly “maxing out” their bandwidth, which prompted them to explore options for more reliable service at an affordable cost.



Solution

The district submitted a request to their school board to upgrade its network’s bandwidth, and sought out additional support through Virginia’s K-12 Learning Infrastructure Program (KLIP) to make their broadband goals a reality. This partnership involves helping districts identify their connectivity needs and developing an action plan to make sure every Virginia district can upgrade at an affordable cost.

PWCS found its support when an EducationSuperHighway state partner at the Virginia Department of Education shared information about the broadband initiative. PWCS then got in touch with our team and developed a plan to implement a successful upgrade.

With guidance provided through that partnership, Prince William’s Director of IT Services used our free price transparency tool to assess how their bandwidth pricing compared to that of other mega-districts. Utilizing EducationSuperHighway as a sounding board, AJ and her team created a strong E-rate Form 470, strengthening their positioning for service provider bids.

Prince William’s goal was to increase to at least 10 Gbps to prepare for future bandwidth demand, so it was important to make sure that the bids they received affordably addressed those needs.



Results

Prince William’s bandwidth increased 10 times over from 2 to 20 Gbps, and its cost per Mbps went down from \$3.95 to \$1.85, giving the mega-district the ability to scale effectively for the future and enhance its “bring-your-own-device” policy. In addition, students with diabetes can now use iPads to connect with their health devices, sharing real-time information with their parents rather than having to forego learning time to call home.