COMETS GET OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD WI-FI

Dickson Public Schools Scales Wi-Fi and Connected Learning with ADTRAN

Dickson Public Schools (DPS), home of the Comets, proudly serves the southern region of Oklahoma, providing quality educational opportunities to nearly 1,300 students. Its 160 staff members strive to do their best to educate tomorrow's leaders, and doing so requires a modern, digital learning environment supported by a wireless network that is simple to manage and scale.

Legacy Wi-Fi Didn't Make the Grade

DPS supported a technology program where carts with Chromebook™ notebook computers were shared among classrooms. The devices were so popular and valuable to the learning experience that the school district planned to dedicate one cart to every classroom. However, DPS did not have the scalable, capacity-rich network it needed to support a growing number of devices.

> *"ADTRAN enabled us to extend our budget and secure a complete set of solutions that meet our networking needs today and will support our future growth, too. It was a no brainer to go with ADTRAN."*

Kevin Caldwell, Technology Director
Dickson Public Schools

Benefits

ADTRAN® provides Dickson Public Schools with a reliable wireless network that will support technology initiatives today and will help create an engaging learning environment for years to come. The most notable benefits to DPS include the new ability to:

- Centralize management with plug and play AP deployments
- Support Chromebook™ notebook computer carts in every classroom
- Increase bandwidth for streaming videos and other media intensive applications
- Extend the reach of the wireless network and connectivity to outdoor areas, like athletic fields

"We knew we needed to upgrade the wireless network. Before we only had five access points, and maintaining seamless connectivity was a challenge. Our legacy Wi-Fi® solutions also made it hard to scale and add on additional access points when needed," said Larry Case, superintendent for Dickson Public Schools.

In addition to scalability issues, DPS' legacy wireless network was composed of equipment from multiple vendors. As a result, the network was not cohesive and required a lot of time and effort to manage.

"We couldn't remotely access or monitor the entire network, so management activities were always fragmented. This meant we had to hunt around for which piece of infrastructure might be causing a problem and resulted in considerable downtime for the network," added Kevin Caldwell, technology director for Dickson Public Schools.

ADTRAN Sets the New Wireless Network Curve

DPS looked to find a new, single-vendor wireless solution that would enable easy scalability and grow with the school district as network capacity needs evolved. ADTRAN met these requirements and more, providing a platform that drives more value into DPS' network, offers seamless scaling capabilities, virtualized management features and enhanced reliability.

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The school district deployed the ADTRAN Bluesocket virtual WLAN (vWLAN) platform, as well as NetVanta® 1600 series Gigabit Ethernet switches. The ADTRAN Bluesocket® vWLAN® solution virtualizes the management and control of the wireless network, making scalability significantly simpler. Whether DPS IT staff needed to create a new SSID or add a new access point to the network, it only takes a few clicks from the central office.

"The best part about ADTRAN is that these solutions are literally plug and play. If I need an access point somewhere, we get one from the office, plug it in, and it's done. It does everything," Caldwell added.

ADTRAN also goes the extra mile to ensure that all DPS deployments continue to run smoothly and all technical needs are met. "ADTRAN calls us back regularly to check up on us and make sure everything is in working order. They provide excellent service compared to what we had in the past," said Caldwell.

Exceptional Educational Experiences

The ADTRAN solutions in the DPS network continue to provide reliable wireless connectivity to support the district's Chromebook™ notebook computer carts—and both students and staff are enjoying the benefits.

The new computers feature faster processing compared to previous devices, and they are purpose built for the digital applications that teachers are incorporating into their curriculum. For example, many classes are now leveraging educational videos on YouTube that are bandwidth-intensive and are creating a more engaging learning environment. ADTRAN enables DPS to support this type of progressive curriculum with reliable network connectivity. Furthermore, because the new computers automatically connect to the Wi-Fi network with a dedicated SSID, teachers spend less time trying to connect technology and can remain focused on providing an exceptional educational experience.

Moving forward, DPS plans to deploy an access point in every classroom to support even more devices and connected learning. It will also extend the Wi-Fi outdoors to athletic fields and even in bus barns. By placing access points in the bus barns, the transportation department can download video feeds as soon as a bus pulls in for more efficient operations.

"Right now, we have to pull out the bus's hard drive, walk it to the office, download the files to a computer, then review it. With ADTRAN, we can remotely stream that video and data as soon it returns from daily routes. At the end of the day, ADTRAN just makes our jobs easier," Caldwell added.