Accessible education for every child

How Chromebooks changed the heart and future of a school

A school of 700 children aged 10-12 years is no small ship to steer. Yet the 66-strong staff of teachers, administrators, teacher aides and resource teachers of learning and behaviour (RTLB) do it every day, running Papatoetoe Intermediate School in Auckland. Located in an area where many families do not have access to the internet or modern devices, the school wanted to make changes that would ensure the best education and opportunity to their youngsters.

Challenge

Six years into her time at Papatoetoe, Principal Pauline Cornwell was keen to make some important changes. "Prior to the first pandemic lockdown in 2020 we had about a 1:3 device to student ratio, a 50% attendance rate, and teachers were still attaching documents to emails in order to plan lessons, share information, and engage with parents. Some of our kids didn't have internet at home and many were sharing devices, such as their mum's phone, with siblings or other family members, in order to do their school work."

> "
> When we first transitioned over we were building the plane as we were flying. Now when I see what's happening in the classroom, it just warms my heart."
>
> **Pauline Cornwell,**
> Principal, Papatoetoe Intermediate School,
> Auckland, NZ

Solution

In order to better engage students, help teachers plan and deliver lessons, and keep track of student progress and streamline administration processes, the school needed devices that would be accessible to every student.

Google for Education helping to engage students

This included the 126 students who required learning support, and their RTLBs who needed to work alongside them to ensure the best experience and outcomes. Efficacy, cost and security was also an issue. "Our old devices, many of which were leased, were expensive to replace and not as robust as we needed. There was also a security issue. When a device was stolen, there was no way to track it or get it back." The trial of a number of Chromebooks with Chrome Education Upgrade licenses was a great success with ease of use, the ability to lock each device to a specific network and user, and cost all helping to solve Papatoetoe's primary challenges. "We had been looking to make the change for a while but when the 2020 lockdown happened, we bit the bullet. Soon every child had access to a Chromebook – and it's been a natural progression from there."

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Affordable devices for every student

Solution deep dive

In addition to the issue that students did not all have 1:1 access to a device, the laptops and computers in the school were mostly leased and draining the budget by up to $90,000 every year. Pauline knew that she could better use that money elsewhere in the school and the affordability of Chromebooks and the Google for Education solution was an attractive way forward.

Huge changes for a big school

Many of the students had used Chromebooks and the associated programs in primary school, so the device was an obvious choice for the school. "We decided that, rather than use a mix of devices, Chromebooks were the best way forward for their learning experience and would ensure better overall digital fluency as they moved into later education or work." Chromebook also offer greater security and the teacher can monitor how it was being used. "Chromebooks removed the security risk because if someone took it, it was useless. Chrome Education Upgrade licence provides granular, flexible policy controls and reporting to protect devices. Enabling for configuration parameters around sign-on and authentication, and remotely wipe lost or stolen devices to protect data.Teachers could also see what it was being used for at home."

What they wanted

- 1:1 devices for all 700 students and staff
- Greater security for devices and a significant reduction in replacement and repair costs
- Greater student and family engagement to increase attendance and outcomes for kids
- More efficient systems relating to administration to ease teacher workloads and streamline clunky processes
- The ability to use budget in other areas of need in the school, such as innovation and digital tech programs

What they did

- Provided every student and teacher with a Chromebook
- Liaised with tech partner Isometric to assist with purchasing and implementation across the student and teacher population
- Provided training and support for teachers, students and parents, both face-to-face and via Google Meet
- Gave all students the ability to learn remotely during the pandemic lockdown
- Implemented daily Google Meets for all staff, and started each day with Google Classroom live Meets to help engage students

What they achieved

- Almost 100% reduction in theft and loss of devices
- A remarkable uplift in student attendance and engagement between 2020 and 2021
- Better relationships and community engagement with families and caregivers
- The budget to purchase all necessary tech equipment, plus the ability to create new robotics and coding programs for all students, savings amounting to around $30,000 annually

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Key Benefits

1

Significant increase in device security and safety

When the school was burgled in 2020, 38 devices were stolen. Incredibly, thanks to having a 1:1 ratio of Chrome Education Upgrade licences to Chromebooks, 36 were returned to the school. "Our IT partner Isometric could track a device as soon as it was connected to the Internet and advise police. In the past, anything that was stolen was just gone, we had no way of knowing where it was or how to recover it."

2

60% increase in student attendance and engagement

Being able to provide every student with a device, particularly during ongoing lockdowns and periods of remote learning, hasn't only given children the ability to learn, it's made them want to learn. "It's really incredible that these children are continuing to learn how to read, write, learn languages, do math, all from home, all through Google Classroom," says Pauline.

3

50% reduction in IT costs and freeing up budget to achieve more

Where once the school was spending up to $90,000 every year in purchasing, repairing and replacing devices that simply didn't last very long, today the required budget is no more than $50-60,000, meaning the funds can be distributed elsewhere to improve other areas of teaching and learning. "Chromebooks are cheaper to buy and last longer," says Pauline who, thanks to the savings, has created a Digital Tech program that allows for greater innovation and opportunity for all students.

4

100% transition over to Google Workspace for Education

From administrative tasks, teacher planning and teaching, learning, and liaising with the whole community, Papatoetoe uses Google Meet, Classroom, Docs and more on their Chromebooks every single day. "The impact across the whole community has been massive," says Pauline. "Teaching is now much more collaborative and our families have a better relationship with the teachers and the school, because we can see and speak to them every day."

Reach out

Contact Isometric to find out how Google for Education can help you achieve your teaching and learning goals. info@isometric.co.nz – 0508 825 501

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