Reliable, Fiber-rich Network Helping Green Dot Public Schools Fulfill its Mission

BACKGROUND

Green Dot Public Schools is committed to changing the landscape of public education in Los Angeles – and to maximize those efforts, the school district needed a bit of information technology landscaping of its own to do, too.

Green Dot's mission is to rejuvenate schools in highest-need areas of the city, with a focus on web-based learning tools and fully preparing students for college. Green Dot Public Schools needed an adequate IT and communications network to fulfill that mission and support the 18 high-achieving public schools. Their T-1 circuits were too slow and the network was unreliable. Plus, they were paying a lot. It was time for a change.

SOLUTIONS

Time Warner Cable Business Class (TWCBC) installed an Ethernet Wide Area Network (EWAN) solution on its wholly-owned fiber-rich network for Green Dot, with up to 1 Gbps of broadband connectivity to each of the system's schools and centralized data center. The network's speed and reliability were significantly more than Green Dot had been receiving from its previous T-1 provider – and teachers and students immediately noticed a vast quality improvement.

What sealed the deal for Green Dot was the company's commitment to getting a new Green Dot network up and running promptly – and in helping the school district apply for E-Rate funding. (See sidebar on back for more information about E-Rate.)

"It [TWCBC's EWAN] is just really super reliable," praised Bill Campbell Vice President of Technology at Green Dot Public Schools.

RESULTS

The reliability of the TWCBC network has enabled Bill to establish processes that meet the Common Core standards and expand access to online learning resources. Email accounts for all students, online benchmark testing, YouTube for classroom research, cloud-based applications such as the Apex Online Learning and Agile Mind and many more bandwidth-intensive learning tools are all now possible. "We're a bandwidth-hungry organization and dependent on the internet like never before," added Bill.

EWAN is an excellent choice for enterprises like school districts, needing any-to-any communication between several locations. EWAN offers scalable bandwidth options and is a cost-effective alternative to legacy technologies because it enables users to help lower their cost of ownership by reducing capital outlays on hardware. Also, EWAN is built on standardized, MEFcompliant Ethernet, making it easy to manage.





Bill Campbell Vice President of Technology



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The security and reliability of the EWAN also enables efficient administrative functions for Green Dot's schools such as the Blue Board application, a cloud-based teacher evaluation and observation system.

The Ethernet network monitoring portal that provides trends reporting and system alerts helps Bill and his IT teams anticipate demand for bandwidth growth. It's an advantage for Bill because "I know what's going on with the network at any given point of time and day," said Bill.

Bill has been especially pleased with the level of attention to detail provided by TWCBC's local Sales and support teams in providing network solutions that adhere to E-rate and California Teleconnect Fund (CTF) standards. He notes a recent situation in which he received advice from a TWCBC billing coordinator about the CTF savings for his phone lines and where and how to apply. "He didn't have to tell me that but it shows they [TWCBC] understand what it is like to operate in a public environment. I'm saving about \$500 a month so that was great coaching." explained Bill.

As an E-rate eligible Telecommunications Provider (ETP), TWCBC assists education entities such as Green Dot to understand the E-rate rules and regulations and to get approval for funding. E-Rate provides discounts to assist many U.S. schools and libraries in obtaining affordable telecommunications and Internet access. Added Bill, "I feel like I deal with people that understand E-Rate... and that's a selling point for TWCBC."

Bill knows that as Green Dot grows and evolves its network will need to expand, too. He is confident that the scalable EWAN solution from TWCBC will easily adapt to the schools' forthcoming needs, such as consolidation of their IT resources across multiple locations Nationwide. "As the need grows... we don't have to look for another provider," said Bill.

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- Bill Campbell Vice President of Technology, Green Dot Public Schools

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