Dr. Mark Edwards envisioned a “Digital Conversion” at Mooresville G.S.D., and just five short years later, the tiny school district in the heart of North Carolina’s NASCAR country is the place to visit. It has become a preferred destination and not just for the excitement of the roaring engines. Winning the titles of “Apple’s Distinctive District” and “1:1 Showcase Site”, Mooresville attracts thousands of educators and administrators each year, hoping to discover the secrets of Mooresville’s technological success and integrate them into their own districts.

To implement Mooresville’s digital conversion, the school district invested in a laptop computer for every single student and staff, which resulted in an initial order of over 5000 computers. The brand-new learning environment allowed the educational focus to be on personalized and project-based learning, using all-digital resources. In order to keep their vision on track, Dr. Edwards and his Chief Technology Officer, Dr. Scott Smith, realized that they needed an innovative solution to managing 5000 computers, along with all of their software, applications and files. They found their solution when they discovered FileWave.
“One of the things I love about FileWave is the great spirit of partnership. Not just great products and great service...but helping us to make a difference for kids.”

— Dr. Mark Edwards, Superintendent of Mooresville Graded School District, Mooresville, North Carolina

Manually distributing wide varieties of software to over 5000 computers located in eight different buildings was the overwhelming task that was facing the Mooresville GSD IT department. They needed a new and systematic way to support the MacBook Airs that were being delivered into the excited hands of their students and teachers. To be successful, the “Digital Conversion” demanded that the IT staff was utilized in an effective and efficient manner, while relying on technology to lighten the workload. FileWave met the challenge.

“Through FileWave, we’re able to reach out and touch 5000 machines at one time. So it’s not the human infrastructure that we’re having to invest in. That’s a huge cost-savings in terms of IT and total cost of ownership and what is going on technically in our department.” Dr. Edwards agrees, “Previously, when we had issues and had to pull files back in, just the entire time-intensive, labor-intensive process...now we have the means, the capacity, the efficiency and the precision with FileWave to reach every student, every teacher’s laptop in immediate fashion.”

The time efficiencies that Mooresville enjoys has allowed their IT department to initiate projects like the student-run help desk, where students use elective class credits to troubleshoot and repair computer problems for teachers and their peers. The teachers view these students as “experts” and often utilize their services in class.

Student interaction also plays a part in the IT staff’s favorite new feature - the FileWave Kiosk. Berry Williams, Mooresville’s LAN Manager says “The Kiosk has been great. We’ve got a bunch of little apps that see use in different places. For instance, the Intermediate Schools heavily use an iStation program that the High School doesn’t look at. We were able to take that out of the image and make it available in the Kiosk.” Dr. Smith agrees, “Through the use of FileWave, we are able to control the environment that the students have and the experience they have.”

FileWave’s granularity has enabled Mooresville High School to offer a variety of specialized classes such as Video Production, which uses the complex Adobe
“For Mooresville Graded School District and our relationship with FileWave, it really has become a game-changer. Now we have the ability to technically meet the needs of every single student through the use of FileWave. The abilities we have for the amount of money we spend...it’s exponential.”

— Dr. Scott Smith, Chief Technology Officer, Mooresville G.S.D.

Visually impaired students can enlarge the screens to view lessons easier and keep up with the rest of their class. 1:1 classes at Mooresville G.S.D. means teachers have more time for individualized and small group instruction.

FileWave Solutions:

- FileWave manages all of Mooresville’s computers from a single admin, distributing, maintaining and pulling back software, apps and files easily.
- The FileWave Kiosk gives students freedom of choice - to go into the pre-configured app system and download what they need.
- Control of when and how much bandwidth is used is a key FileWave feature.
- FileWave is a multi-platform management system and integrates well with all Apple/ Mac products.

Creative Suite and a large amount of memory and bandwidth. The IT staff can push individualized software to students for one semester, delete it and make it available for another student the second semester, as well as have complete control over when and how much bandwidth they use.

Another unique FileWave feature that Dr. Smith appreciates is the seamless way that FileWave ‘works in the background’. “One of the neat things about FileWave is you can push something to the machine - if they close the lids and change classes and come back an hour later, FileWave just picks up in the background right where it left off. So really, it doesn’t miss a beat!”

Currently, Mooresville distributes the MacBook Air as the model laptop to their third grade through high school students. They use iPads with their Specialized Learning population and their K-2 students. The tablet’s versatility help visually and auditorially-impaired students keep up with their peers through the use of enlarged screens and text-to-speech programs. The touchscreens enable tactile learners. The functionality of early math and reading apps on the iPad have been a huge hit with K-2 students, helping them adapt to learning new skills. Encouraged by these initial successes, Dr. Smith is very enthusiastic about incorporating Mobile Device Management solution into Mooresville’s agenda for future growth.

Dr. Edwards considers Mooresville’s investment in FileWave, “a game-changer”. “When we look at the Digital Conversion and the means to bring efficiency to operations, that’s the personification of FileWave. When you think about the manpower, the hours, the planning that it takes to retrieve machines manually, rather than to be able to push out software and, in an instant, click. So the efficiency, the precision and ultimately, the effectiveness of FileWave - it’s huge!”

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Mooresville G.S.D.

Doing Digital Right

When Dr. Mark Edwards stepped into his position as Superintendent of Mooresville G.S.D. in North Carolina, academic performance and graduation rates were at 65%. Five years after initiating his “Digital Conversion”, Mooresville is Apple’s Distinguished District and has risen from 38th to 3rd on North Carolina’s list of schools of distinction. Composite test scores have risen 21% and the dropout rate has fallen 54%.

Enter any classroom at Mooresville High School and you’ll find students engaged in learning, collaborating on projects with open laptops and not a textbook in sight. According to Edwards, “We decided that to really meet the needs of students in the twenty-first century, it was vitally important that we link their work in school to their future and not our past. So we moved to provide every student with a device, we moved to all digital resources and we’ve created an environment where personalized learning, project-based learning, interactivity and collaboration are the daily norm for all students and staff.”

“Out of the 3000 U.S. schools with 1:1 programs, Mooresville is one district that is getting it right.”*

— Tom Greaves, CEO and Co-founder of Project Red, National Education Technology Research and Advocacy Organization

In 1:1 environments, like Mooresville, students can move at their own pace and teachers, though heavily involved, spend their time in one-on-one or small group mode rather than lecturing to a large class. Laptops, and now tablet devices, also play an important role in educating the special needs population. Visually and auditorily-challenged students, as well as tactile learners, can now keep up in class using specially designed enlarged screens, headphones or touchscreens to augment their learning process. According to Project Red findings, the impact of technology in the classroom is overwhelmingly positive, contributing to cost reductions and productivity improvements.*

Dr. Edwards takes the Project Red research results a step further. “This is not only about the technology. It’s about changing the culture of instruction - preparing students for their future, not our past. Dr. Scott Smith, Mooresville Chief Technology Officer agrees, “When you put a piece of technology in the hands of students and teachers, the technology itself is not that big of a deal, but what they can do with that technology is absolutely amazing. The term I like to use is “Technology enables exponential potential”.”

“Other districts are doing things, but what we see in Mooresville is the whole package: using the budget, innovating, involvement with the community and leadership,” said Karen Cator, director of educational technology for the U.S. Dept. of Education.

The ‘whole package’, Mooresville G.S.D. and their 1:1 digital conversion, is enabling students’ future potential for success - exponentially.


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Project Red’s Key Implementation Factors for Success*

- Technology is integrated into every class period.
- Principals provide time to teachers for professional learning and collaboration at least monthly.
- Students use technology daily for online collaboration.
- Technology is integrated into core curriculum.
- Online formative assessments are done at least weekly.
- Student-computer ratio: Lower ratios improve outcomes, 1:1 is best.
- Virtual field trips: The best schools do these at least monthly.
- Search engines: Students use daily.
- Principals are trained in teacher buy-in, best practices and technology-transformed learning

Schools that employ the Key Implementation Factors OUTPERFORM all schools and ALL 1:1 schools.

Mooresville Graded School District Employs ALL NINE Factors for Success!