MAKING THE GRADE: CONSTANTLYON IT®

ANCHORAGE MONTESSORI SCHOOL EXPANDS ITS CAPACITY TENFOLD AT HALF THE COST WITH INNOVATIVE I.T. SOLUTIONS

BACKGROUND: ANCHORAGE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Keeping students engaged and curious in today's digital learning environment can be challenging for any educational organization. But it's even more difficult when saddled with minimal bandwidth and sluggish connectivity.

Such was the case for Anchorage Montessori School. With a low speed connection, the organization faced the challenge of facilitating its hands-on Montessori learning approach while accommodating the demands of streaming audio and video and a growing number of laptops, tablets, and mobile devices. Adding to the school's quandary was obsolete hardware and software, as well as inadequate security and ineffective data management.

While Anchorage Montessori's leaders had searched for a new IT provider, they couldn't find adequate solutions that fit within the nonprofit's financial limitations.

ANCHORAGE MONTESSORI SCHOOL
Anchorage, Alaska

CORE PRACTICE

Education — From infant/toddler programs to high-school

BUSINESS NEEDS

Reliable connectivity, appropriate bandwidth, scalable IT services, and network security

SOLUTION

All-inclusive, end-to-end IT management solution

BUSINESS VALUE

Significantly improved computing environment for staff and students while reducing overall IT risks, expenses, and challenges

SOLUTION: CUSTOMIZED, ALL-INCLUSIVE SERVICE

Alaska Communications introduced ConstantlyOn IT®. The comprehensive end-to-end IT management solution features scalable services to meet the school's specific business requirements.

Embracing a solutions approach to meet business outcomes, the Alaska Communications team developed a customized package that delivered within Anchorage Montessori's budget constrains.

NEW HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE — The team updated the school's 2003 end-of-life software platform to a 2015 Microsoft Windows server. And to offset expenses, they upgraded the operating systems on a number of used computers that had been donated by a student's parent. Plus, they acquired new software at one-tenth the normal cost.

NETWORK SECURITY — A comprehensive inventory assessment revealed the school dangerously lacked appropriate data backup, firewall security, and proactive system maintenance. The team implemented a new Dell PowerEdge server and WatchGuard Unified Threat Management firewall device. Acting as the client's trusted IT adviser, the team leveraged pricing strategies utilizing vendor nonprofit discounts. This resulted in solutions implemented for a fraction of the standard non-discounted price, which normally runs three times more.

AROUND-THE-CLOCK NETWORK MONITORING — Today, an off-site security team monitors the school's network 24x7x365 via an automated alert monitoring and resolution system. Anti-spam, malware, and intrusion preventions now fully protect Anchorage Montessori's network. The Unified Threat Management suite, including URL filtering services, ensures that students and faculty don't abuse bandwidth by accessing restricted sites.

RISK DATA MANAGEMENT — Because the school had a lax password protection policy, the team helped establish stricter rules that safeguarded data and complied with IT and educational standards. Users no longer keep passwords for long periods, and only designated users can access, edit or delete specific files while performing certain business functions.

FULL-SERVICE DESK SUPPORT — Thanks to a direct connection to Alaska Communications's help desk, nearly 80 percent of the school's IT issues now gets resolved quickly. The support team can remote in and troubleshoot within minutes rather than having to dispatch a technician to resolve issues on-site.

OUTCOME: TRANSPARENCY FOSTERS TRUST

Before enlisting Alaska Communications for Anchorage Montessori's IT transformation the school's executive director Rick Toymil stressed his need for more in-depth IT services that were cost effective. Since Anchorage Montessori is a nonprofit, all major expenses must be approved by the school's board of directors.

Not wanting to incur extra IT costs, Toymil and his staff had often overlooked minor issues. Long gone are those days, because ConstantlyOn IT® comes at a flat monthly rate. Toymil now enjoys peace of mind knowing he's reducing the school's risk with a scalable set of IT services—including preventive checkups and routine maintenance—without any budget uncertainty.

What's more, he can take full financial advantage of the established partnerships that Alaska Communications has formed with the industry's leading companies. For example, the team is currently working toward converting the school from a hosted email service set at a monthly rate to a Microsoft Office 365 solution that's available to educational organizations for free.

"The Alaska Communications team came in and truly listened to our challenges and then developed cost-effective solutions to address our IT needs. They've been a true partner and have exceeded all my expectations. And they continue looking for customized solutions that will enhance the educational experience that we provide."

— Rick Toymil, Executive Director,
    Anchorage Montessori School

Learn More:
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