

Case Study

education

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Shawnee Mission School District

Ricoh Serves as Catalyst for Information Mobility and Sweeping Cost Savings at Shawnee Mission School District

"Ricoh has been a great partner for our district. Their solutions provided immediate impact to our teachers' ability to instruct our students, while saving the district funds. All of this while saving our IT time and over 5,000 trees with reduced paper usage."

*– Dr. Jim Hinson
Superintendent
USD 512, Shawnee Mission
School District
Johnson County District*



ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

It seems counterintuitive that many school districts around the country are still heavily reliant on paper-based processes and print. After all, students engrossed in a K-12 education today are digital natives—they've never known another way of life. The majority of the teachers just now entering the workforce gained their professional footing in a digital-centric world. Even veteran teachers and staff have become increasingly digital savvy in their work and personal lives.

"Almost two decades in, you would think all school districts would have moved to a 21st Century digital learning environment," said Drew Lane, executive director of information and communication technologies at Shawnee Mission School District. "The reality is that some have, and some haven't."

Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) in Johnson County, Kansas knew the time was now for a paradigm shift in learning. Not just to transform teaching and learning into a digital environment—but to significantly lower costs, encourage greater collaboration, revitalize its print center, reduce its environmental impact and make information work for all of its teachers, students and staff.

SMSD is the third largest school district in Kansas. It serves approximately 28,000 students and has 4,100 teachers and staff that work in the district's 33 elementary schools, five middle schools, one alternative site and five high schools.

CHALLENGE

- Transition from print-heavy environment to digital learning
- Large desktop printer fleet, paper waste, extraneous printing
- Skyrocketing operating costs
- Print center with antiquated workflow, slow delivery

SOLUTION

- Replace desktop fleet with Ricoh MFPs and color printers
- Ricoh Integrated Cloud Environment (ICE)
- Equitrac® Express authentication, reporting, Follow Me printing
- TRAC web submission for the district print center

RESULTS

- 50 percent drop in printing, \$750,000 hard cost/paper savings
- 90 percent fewer printer service calls, shift to mobile IT support
- Over 5,000 trees saved, 90 percent reduced carbon footprint
- Revitalized print center, digital learning success

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CHALLENGE

In 2014, SMSD officially said hello to the digital age of learning.

SMSD set out to provide every student and teacher in the district with an Apple® iPad® or MacBook® Air. While the district wanted to create a modern digital learning environment, it also saw the opportunity to curb the costs of purchasing, managing and maintaining a desktop printing fleet along with a staggering amount of paper output. The district had long operated within a traditional education business model with a nearly 1:1 printer-to-staff ratio.

Within this traditional education model, the district purchased desktop printers for all the schools and oversaw the fleet's maintenance, leaving each school to pay only for the paper it consumed. There were no rules or constraints around printing, leading to significant waste and extraneous printing. The district also had no visibility on output volumes or authentication at each printer to determine the heavy users at each school or prevent information from landing in the wrong hands.

“Ricoh typically deals in printing and machines that generate clicks and hard copy. We approached them with a proposition to use their machines as little as possible and they were interested.”

Furthermore, when users wanted to scan information to share it with others, they had only one scan-to folder for each school that potentially left confidential information exposed. Google Drive® was enlisted for some collaborative efforts, but few users knew how to use it and it was largely discarded—in lieu of paper-based collaboration.

All of this was causing operating costs to skyrocket at SMSD. A team of SMSD IT technicians constantly labored to keep the fleet of inefficient desktop printers up and running.

“There were a number of areas where we thought we could reduce our costs while also facilitating a modern digital learning environment,” said Lane.

There was also the matter of the district's on-site print center. It was losing money year after year and volumes were declining. Five employees managed the print center, handling about 2,100 jobs annually. They printed anything and everything with antiquated workflow processes that severely slowed delivery times.

“We were losing money in the print center because it wasn't properly organized, not because we produced bad work,” said Lane.

To submit an order, print center customers had to complete a purchase order with requisition number—along with a series of other manual steps. A single project could take weeks to finish, even when there were few other print jobs in the center. The district needed a partner with expertise to analyze the environment and focus the print center's tasks while increasing efficiency and capabilities.

As the district's long-time copier provider, Ricoh was a well-known entity to SMSD. Impressed by its experience with Ricoh through the years, SMSD invited Ricoh to submit a print optimization plan to support the district as it transitioned to a modern digital learning environment.

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SOLUTION

Ricoh immediately understood the mission—make the school district just as efficient and savvy as today's digital business world. That's where the students are eventually headed. And that's where SMSD wanted to be.

Working with SMSD and leveraging a U.S. Communities cooperative purchasing program, Ricoh began by removing approximately 4,000 (99 percent) of the district's local desktop printers and replaced them with 270 Ricoh MFPs, color printers and production printers. Each MFP was connected to Ricoh's Integrated Cloud Environment (ICE), which allows SMSD staff to scan documents directly to a Cloud service.

That scanned information can be accessed electronically from any internet-connected device—anywhere, anytime. Then, teachers can send documents electronically to their students, who have immediate access to the information on their school-issued iPad or MacBook Air.

"The long-term goal was to change the way we teach. To get our staff out of the mindset of print and into an environment where we share and collaborate digitally," said Lane. "Ricoh helped us make that happen."

Ricoh implemented Equitrac® Express print audit software to hold teachers and administrators accountable for what they do print. With this technology, users send their print jobs to an MFP and have to authenticate at the device via their badges to retrieve their printed document. This also ensures that only the authenticated user has access to sensitive district information.

Also, every document printed at one of the Ricoh MFPs across the district is tracked and analyzed through Equitrac. SMSD receives customized reports that show precisely who is printing, what they are printing and which device they are using. Follow-Me functionality was also activated within Equitrac to allow SMSD staff to print anywhere on campus they happen to be.

"Follow-Me printing has been very well received," said Lane. "If there's something you absolutely need to print but are in a different building on campus, you can print to the building where you're at, grab it and go."

Still, some print jobs are too large or complicated for teachers to produce on the Ricoh MFPs. Ricoh Managed Services took over the day-to-day operations at the district's print center and limited the jobs it could perform to streamline the workflow and increase efficiency. Teachers now send print jobs electronically in a single step using the TRAC web submission tool implemented by Ricoh. The automated system submits print jobs in mere seconds and teachers can track the progress of their job in real time online.

"Restructuring and re-tasking the print center has had a positive impact on our consumables costs and helped the print center be more focused and efficient," said Lane.

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Going forward, Ricoh and SMSD are exploring Syncplicity file sharing to make accessing information anytime, anywhere, from any device even easier. Currently, SMSD stores its data using a traditional shared drive model, which sequesters data behind the district's firewall and prevents it from being readily available outside the network.

This discourages collaboration because unlocking data outside the network requires a trip to the SMSD IT department, filling out forms, establishing a shared drive and IT intervention to maintain the shared drive and add users. With Syncplicity, users who originate data get to decide who can and can't see the data—and the data remains secure.

"You get the security of a shared drive, but the freedom for mobile users to share with who they want to—without having to wait for our technology team to enable that," said Lane.

RESULTS

The payoff from the partnership between SMSD and Ricoh has been quite impressive. For starters, comments about the shift to a digital learning environment from faculty and staff have been overwhelmingly positive.

"95 percent of the comments have been positive. Our faculty and staff really like the convenience and how well all the technology works," said Lane.

There has been an overall reduction in printing across the district since Ricoh helped SMSD make the transition to digital. Hard cost savings are real. Environmental benefits are evident. And the print center is now a thriving asset.

"Ricoh has aligned perfectly with our one-to-one initiative enabling electronic information in each school," said Deb Zila, former school board president at SMSD. "And if something needs to be printed, we have a resource that teachers can count on."

Less Printing, Significant Cost Savings

While becoming a digital learning environment was priority one, reducing costs placed a close second. Dramatic cuts in the printing fleet has led to dramatic reductions in print volumes throughout the district—as well as sizeable cost savings.

In the first year of the program, SMSD saw a nearly 50 percent drop in printing and Lane expects another 50 percent reduction in the second full year. There were more than 44 million fewer clicks during the first year. Hard costs savings in year one totaled \$600,000 plus another \$150,000 in paper savings.

"We know at some point the print reduction and cost savings will level off—or even tick up a bit as our student body grows or class sizes increase," said Lane. "But we now have the ability to see where those clicks come from and make decisions based on that information."

Reduced Print Support, Smart Labor Force

The year prior to the shift to the digital learning environment, there were 3,264 calls to SMSD's help desk related to printers. Those calls have been reduced by 90 percent, as Ricoh provides full support for the MFPs. Lifting this burden has allowed SMSD's IT department to shift its focus to supporting the digital learning environment and concentrating on student and teacher mobile device support.

"We're still busy, but we're not worrying about printers anymore," said Lane. "We used to have 45 people in the department dealing with printers and now we have just two or three that make sure Equitrac and TRAC are working. They don't even need to involve me anymore. They call Ricoh directly and any issues are resolved quickly."

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Environmental Advantages, Security Gains

While environmental and security gains weren't primary drivers for the transition to a digital learning environment, SMSD counts them among the significant perks of the initiative. By reducing clicks and paper usage, SMSD estimates it has saved approximately 5,281 trees in the first year as well as reduced the energy required to process trees and paper. Also, there are far fewer printers consuming energy across the district, resulting in a 90 percent carbon footprint reduction.

Security benefits certainly can't be ignored. Now that users have to badge into the MFPs to authenticate and retrieve printed materials, SMSD has greater assurance that sensitive district information is protected.

"If a print job isn't picked up at the MFP of the user's choosing within 24 hours, it gets erased from the system," said Lane. "This greatly reduces the chance of information leaking out."

In the first year of its digital learning initiative, SMSD reduced printing by 50 percent, cut hard costs by \$600,000, achieved \$150,000 in paper savings, reduced its carbon footprint by 90 percent and saved an estimated 5,281 trees.

Focused Print Center, Digital Learning

The revitalized, more focused print center stands out as a shining example of the partnership's success. Prior to refocusing the print center, 70 percent of the district's faculty didn't even know the print center existed. Now, more than 70 percent of the faculty uses the center.

The district's print center is now a centralized printing hub and vital resource for the district, run seamlessly by Ricoh Managed Services. It's no longer operating at a loss and costing the district money. In fact, volume at the center skyrocketed from 1,700 jobs before the shift to more than 12,000 jobs in 2014. Turnaround times have also dramatically improved. It used to take the print center, on average, nearly 7 days to complete a job. Now, delivery times are two days or less—with 99.3 percent completed on time or ahead of the requested delivery date.

"Going forward, we're looking at more ways to use the print center—like shifting large jobs printed at the building level to the print shop. We could implement rules at the MFPs to help prompt that," said Lane.

"Even more so, we want our people to really look at whether they need to even generate the click. Instead, can they do what they need to do in a digital format?" said Lane. "That's the core of our digital learning initiative and so far, it's been a great success."



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