

# COMCAST CONNECTION ENRICHES CALIFORNIA SCHOOL DISTRICT CURRICULUM AND ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO REACH BEYOND THE CLASSROOM



## THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The Internet has ushered in a new age in education. The medium has created a cultural shift from one where students learn from mere observation to one that enables active participation. At Folsom Cordova Unified School District, near Sacramento, administrators understand that teachers and students need fast, reliable connections to fully harness the power of online resources.

Despite deep budget cuts and constrained resources, the District recognized the importance of upgrading its network infrastructure. Current T1s were too slow and inefficient to support current and future District activities including cloud-based applications.

The District worked within the framework of the California Teleconnect Fund and E-Rate to develop an RFI to immediately upgrade 20 school sites and a plan to transition remaining schools at a future date.

“In today’s content rich online environment, if school districts are on a T1 – they really feel it,” said Joe Jenkins, Chief Technology Officer at Folsom Cordova Unified School District. “To ensure we’re best serving our students and our community, we needed a major upgrade to provide a scalable solution that delivers reliable and fast Internet service to support all audiences in the District.”

## SOLUTION REQUIREMENTS

- **Speed:** The network solution must eclipse T1 speeds that were inadequate for current and future District activities.
- **Scalability:** Education is now fundamentally and powerfully interlaced with technology and online resources. To ensure teachers have access to bandwidth-intensive information today and years from now, the network solution must scale to meet future demand.
- **Value:** The District faces unprecedented pressure to do more with less including finding efficient ways to conduct business to save time and money. Speed and ability to centralize are critical to District efforts.
- **Knowledge of E-Rate and California Teleconnect Fund:** The network provider must work within the project scope established by the District and within the structure set by E-Rate and the California Teleconnect Fund.

## THE COMCAST BUSINESS SOLUTION

Working within the framework established by the District, E-Rate and the California Teleconnect Fund, Comcast deployed a robust solution that increased speeds 60 times with only a marginal increase in costs.

## SITUATION

- Slow T1s in the Folsom Cordova Unified School District hindered digital learning efforts and hampered ability to centralize data.
- As teachers augment curriculum with online resources, they need fast connections for robust lesson plans.
- District-wide budget cuts require personnel to explore options that create efficiencies while maintaining high standards for education and operations.
- The district navigated the national E-Rate program and coordinated with the California Teleconnect Fund to solicit bids to replace T1s.

## CHALLENGE

- The School District sought to upgrade its network infrastructure to provide more bandwidth and faster speeds to support an Internet-centric curriculum and improve overall district administration efforts.
- The District required faster speeds even as it was reducing expenditures by more than \$14M in 2010-2011.

## SOLUTION

- Comcast wired 20 schools in the Folsom Cordova Unified School District with Comcast Business Ethernet Network Service.
- Comcast Business Ethernet Network Service is perfect for organizations with many locations and high data traffic.

## RESULTS

- The District increased speeds from 15Mbps to 1Gbps – a solution that is 60 times faster than its previous T1-based network.
- Teachers, students and administrators realize significant benefits through IP-based services and applications.

Comcast's 1Gbps solution leapfrogged the District's current T1 1.5Mbps speed by leveraging the company's vast California fiber-based network. In addition, Comcast surpassed technical requirements and delivered connections to 20 schools within an aggressive three-month time frame.

## THE RESULTS

### Learning beyond the classroom

The Comcast Business Ethernet Network Service delivers a reliable, big-bandwidth solution that allows teachers to design rich lesson plans. The ultra-fast 1Gbps connection supports digital classrooms that allow learners to access resources and information beyond the traditional classroom.

"Technology fundamentally changes how students learn and think about the world around them," said Jenkins. "With the Comcast network in place, I am challenging my team to think differently and focus on how we can improve education and deliver new experiences to our students."

### New capabilities and improved operations

With the significant increase in bandwidth, the district has realized significant operational benefits. The IT group has been able to centralize 70% of the district's data which enables personnel to more easily manage and access files. Also, with a solid, scalable network in place, there are new opportunities for cloud-based applications. The District will leverage network capabilities for improved disaster recovery plans and offsite backup.

### Partner in enhancing education

Folsom Cordova recognizes the power of community partnership in advancing education. During the bid process, the District valued Comcast's programs, services and overall community involvement as tangible proof of its commitment to supporting education with technology solutions. The District also found Comcast's expertise in the E-Rate application process highly valuable. E-Rate is administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company, under the direction of the FCC. The program provides discounts to assist schools in obtaining affordable communications services.

## ABOUT

The Folsom Cordova Unified School District serves 19,500 students via 19 elementary schools, four middle schools, three comprehensive high schools, two alternative high schools, one community day school and one community charter school. The District's boundaries include the cities of Folsom and Rancho Cordova, Calif. FCUSD employs more than 1,760 people and is proud to have the highest number of National Board Certified teachers in the region. FCUSD has a rich tradition of staff development and the emphasis on continual improvement encourages employees to learn new and effective strategies necessary to address the diverse needs of all students.

***"Comcast's technology transcends a network solution. The company has become a strategic partner who is vested in the success of our students and community. Equally impressive, Comcast guaranteed its work. It's rare to have a provider be so confident that it's willing to put its money where its mouth is."***

- Joe Jenkins  
Chief Technology Officer  
Folsom Cordova Unified  
School District