

# COMCAST CONNECTION PROVIDES ENDLESS EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS IN INDIANA SCHOOL DISTRICT



## THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Like many school districts nationwide, Fort Wayne Community Schools installed ISDN-based connections in the mid 1990s and later converted them to T1 lines. "Our main challenge was limited bandwidth," explained Jack Byrd, Director of Technology for the district. "Data communication among our buildings was painfully slow. In addition, we only had one T1 line to the Internet, which was very sluggish."

That's when the district began looking for a faster, more reliable, and cost-effective communications solution with scalable bandwidth. "Not only did we want to link our district sites together via a seamless network, but we also wanted to provide greater access to our Internet connection," Byrd added.

## THE COMCAST BUSINESS SOLUTION

The Comcast Business Ethernet Network Service connects 56 sites in the district, including schools, administrative offices, nutrition services, maintenance and operations, and the vocational center. The solution provides highly secure, any-to-any connectivity to ensure fast and efficient data transmission, as well as file sharing and document storage via the district's central server. It also provides greater access to the district's Internet connection.

"With Comcast, our teachers and students no longer deal with bandwidth restraints," Byrd explained. "And, since we recently upgraded to a 10-gig link, we have the flexibility to add more sites to the network or increase bandwidth among existing sites. This is a very scalable and smart solution."

Now Fort Wayne students use the Comcast connection to take up to 50 electronic field trips each year to destinations worldwide. They visited Ohio to observe knee replacement surgery and Alaska to meet the sled dogs that run the Iditarod Trail race. They've also watched performances at the Shakespeare Festival in New York, talked with NASA scientists, and collaborated with fellow students in England and Australia.

"Comcast has afforded our students with an incredible educational opportunity, as well as provided our district with a substantial return on investment," Byrd said. "Clearly, our sales team worked hard to provide us with a robust service, and our support team is always very responsive to our requests. This is a great partnership."

One way that Comcast added value to its partnership with Fort Wayne Community Schools was helping Byrd and his team navigate the E-Rate application process. E-Rate is the commonly used name for the Schools and Libraries Program, which is administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company, under the direction of the Federal Communications Commission. The program provides discounts to assist schools and libraries in obtaining affordable communications access.

"Our sales and support team walked us through the E-Rate process and helped us every step of the way, from the application through invoicing. Comcast has invested heavily in our education community," Byrd concluded.

## SITUATION

- Fort Wayne Community Schools, Indiana
- Over 50 locations
- 31,000 students
- Diverse student population: 90 languages spoken
- 60% of pupils qualify for National Free Lunch Program

## CHALLENGE

- Find a fast, reliable, and cost-effective networking solution that connects 56 locations and provides greater access to the Internet for students and staff.

## SOLUTION

- Comcast Business Ethernet Network Service

## RESULTS

- Fort Wayne Community Schools save nearly \$100,000
- Educational opportunities flourish
- Reliability now and scalability for the future

## THE RESULTS

### Fort Wayne Community Schools Save Nearly \$100,000

Comcast Business Ethernet Network Service links 56 sites within the Fort Wayne Community School District efficiently and cost-effectively. “Compared to the previous service, we now save nearly \$100,000 each year with Comcast,” Byrd explained. “That is a large sum in any economy. This solution also gives us nearly 100 times the bandwidth than before.”

### Educational Opportunities Flourish

“There is no limit to what our students can accomplish because of Comcast,” Byrd said. “With this type of robust connection, our kids experience no road blocks to the types of things they want to do, from taking electronic field trips to Skyping with peers in other countries.”

### Reliability Now and Scalability for the Future

“Reliability is key for us,” Byrd added. “We have experienced very few problems with the network in the past eight years, yet we know our Comcast support team is always available if we need them.” Scalability is equally important to the district. “Growing the network is so easy. We can either add more buildings or increase bandwidth among existing buildings.”

**[BUSINESS.COMCAST.COM/ETHERNET](http://BUSINESS.COMCAST.COM/ETHERNET)**

***“Comcast has provided our students with an incredible educational opportunity at a very cost-effective price. No other provider can come within a mile of what Comcast gives us.”***

- Jack Byrd  
Director of Technology  
Fort Wayne  
Community Schools