

DO MORE WITH LESS WITH MANAGED SERVICES

3 ways schools can benefit from managed
network services from a trusted provider



Doing more with less has become almost a cliché. Yet, for many K-12 IT employees, it's simply business as usual.

With managed services, K-12 IT departments can keep up with rapidly evolving needs without investing in costly equipment that's quickly obsolete.

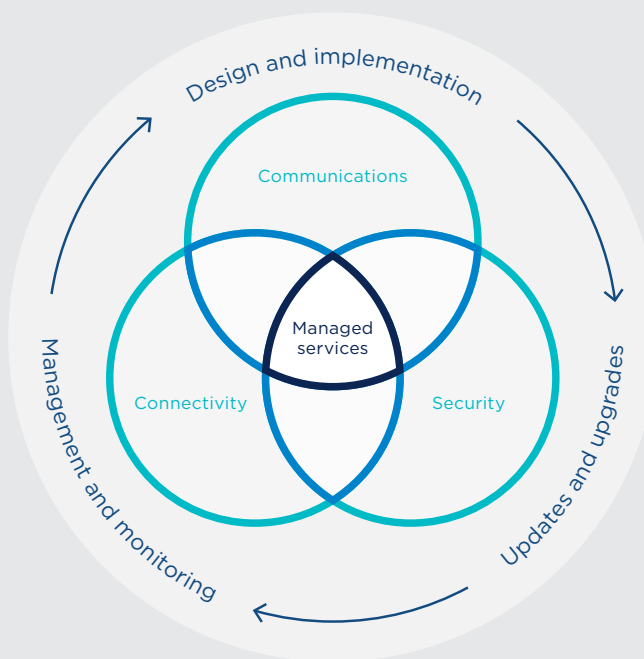
School district IT departments must implement and support an ever-growing number of hardware and software applications. There are systems for teaching and assessing, for analyzing and reporting on student performance and for running back-office enterprise software. Then, there is the underlying IT infrastructure that transmits and stores all of this information. K-12 technology departments are tasked with making sure these various systems work together seamlessly and are used effectively to improve education.

With each new system that's added, there is rarely a proportional increase in IT resources. The IT departments in most K-12 school systems are chronically understaffed, and this affects their ability to integrate and support new technologies — as well as train teachers and other personnel how to use them.

Managed network and security services can help schools solve this challenge, empowering IT staff to truly do more with less.

With managed services, K-12 IT departments can keep up with rapidly evolving needs without investing in costly equipment that's quickly obsolete. They can extend the capabilities of their IT staff, allowing team members to focus on more strategic priorities. And they can achieve predictable costs, making it simpler to budget for IT needs.

Freeing resources to focus on teaching, learning and student success



Keep up with modern needs

K-12 connectivity needs are growing exponentially. As districts undergo a digital transformation, the average school district nationwide has seen its need for bandwidth grow by at least 50 percent year over year.¹ Nearly two in five school systems (39 percent) haven't yet achieved the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) goal of at least 1 gigabit per second (Gbps) of bandwidth for every 1,000 students in their schools.²

To meet the FCC's connectivity goal, schools districts need upgrades.³

- 57 percent will need to upgrade their gateway router.
- 54 percent will need new network switches.
- 37 percent will have to upgrade their firewall components.
- 35 percent will have to upgrade their infrastructure.

Purchasing and installing network equipment locks schools into using the same technology for at least three to five years, and maybe more. If leaders have planned wisely and correctly anticipated their future needs, that might be fine. But even then, school systems might be paying for more capacity than they need initially.

A managed approach to network technology allows K-12 leaders to invest in a solution that matches their current demands but can easily expand to accommodate future requirements.

Instead of owning equipment that might become obsolete in a few years, leaders can be secure in the knowledge that they'll always have access to the latest technology — and a solution that meets their exact needs at any given time.



the amount an average school district has seen its need for bandwidth grow year over year.⁴



Extend the capabilities of IT staff

K-12 districts face many challenges in staffing their IT departments. Tight budgets frequently prevent them from hiring the full cadre of employees they need to support IT effectively. Even when they do add more staff, they're often competing with the private sector for top talent, making recruitment and retention more difficult. In light of these challenges, school district IT departments often have trouble adequately meeting all of their needs.

The Consortium for School Networking's annual IT Leadership Survey has revealed staffing shortages within K-12 IT departments in every year of its existence. In the 2021 survey:⁵

- 55 percent of school district chief information officers (CIOs) said they don't have enough staff to integrate technology into classrooms.
- 36 percent lack the staff to support their district's IT needs effectively.
- 26 percent even struggle to maintain basic network systems.

Managed network services can reduce the burden on overextended IT departments. With a managed solution, knowledgeable and highly qualified experts are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to maintain, support, troubleshoot and update network infrastructure. This enables districts to keep their networks running smoothly without having to commit their own IT personnel.

Working with a managed services provider would give the quarter of school systems that struggle to maintain their networks immediate support for mission-critical operations. For districts that can support their networks, a managed solution would allow them to redeploy IT resources to address other strategic priorities they rarely have time for — like implementing new IT systems or training teachers how to use technology effectively for instruction.

Challenges of in-house IT staffing	Benefits of using outside, managed talent
Shortage of qualified applicants Many school systems struggle to find IT employees with the right qualifications.	A pool of talented professionals Working with a managed services provider gives you immediate access to an on-demand pool of IT experts, ensuring that services are always supported.
Salary constraints Few K-12 districts can match the IT salaries offered in the private sector.	An extension of your team Managed service providers act as extensions of a school system's IT team, taking on basic maintenance so your staff can focus on more strategic priorities.
Lack of training for IT staff Many school systems struggle to offer professional support for emerging IT leaders.	Advanced training and certifications When you entrust your network services to a qualified provider, you know their staff is always equipped with the latest industry knowledge and certifications.

Managed services are E-rate eligible

Managed internal broadband services (MIBS) are E-rate eligible in Category 2. The FCC defined MIBS as “services provided by a third party for the operation, management and monitoring of eligible broadband internal connections.” Eligible expenses include the installation, activation and configuration of eligible components — as well as on-site training on their use.

Achieve predictable costs

Budgeting for technology has been the top IT challenge facing school systems for years.⁶ Taking a managed approach to network services can help district leaders budget more effectively by trading unpredictable, intermittent IT expenses for fixed and regular monthly costs that are easier to plan around.

Traditionally, school district IT departments have purchased and installed network technologies through large capital expenditures. The downside to this approach is that strategic IT planning can become contingent on the availability of new funding. As a result, districts might be stuck with outdated equipment until they can raise the capital they need for a network refresh cycle.

A managed services approach can support more stable and consistent IT budgeting. This helps leaders successfully predict and manage their network expenses, including the cost of routine maintenance. There are no more unpleasant surprises when a piece of equipment fails and no more scrambling to find the money to replace an aging router or wireless access point.

Managed services not only reduce risk and increase budget stability, they can even shrink overall costs. According to one source, 83 percent of organizations that shifted to managed IT services saved money by doing so — and half reduced their IT expenditures by 25 percent or more.⁷

Managed solutions that meet schools’ needs

From flexible wide-area networks to wireless connectivity and multiple security options, Spectrum Enterprise offers a wide range of managed solutions to help schools build and maintain a secure, reliable network infrastructure from a single, trusted provider.



● **Managed WiFi:** Meet student, teacher and staff demands for a reliable connection to the internet anywhere on campus. This turnkey solution offers 24/7/365 support with no equipment to buy.



● **Managed Security Service:** Keep your network secure with a fully managed security solution that includes a firewall and unified threat management (UTM), intrusion detection and prevention, anti-malware, antivirus, event log management and more.



DDoS Protection: Protect your network from malicious volumetric attacks designed to overload a network and prevent access to school applications, systems and information with world-class distributed denial of service (DDoS) threat identification and mitigation.



● **Managed SD-WAN:** Improve application performance on your network using SD-WAN technology that enhances the end-user experience. With this adaptable, managed solution, your school or district can be more flexible, more responsive and better able to keep pace with growing demands.



Managed Network Edge: Simplify the deployment and management of your institution's network with this modular, all-in-one solution. Delivered over the Cisco Meraki platform, Managed Network Edge offers security, routing, SD-WAN, WiFi, switching and cameras. Achieve flexibility and scalability with connectivity, equipment and network management from a single partner.



● **Managed Router Service:** Efficiently route traffic and improve bandwidth use without investing in hardware or day-to-day management.



Unified Communications: Answer communication and collaboration needs for your educators and staff with a fully managed cloud-based unified communications solution that includes video and voice conferencing, messaging, desktop sharing and more for today's mobile, on-the-go workforce.

(● Solutions are E-rate eligible)

Partner with a proven provider you can trust

With Spectrum Enterprise, you don't just get a technology vendor, you get a proven partner who can meet all your connectivity needs. As your managed services provider, we offer an extensive, modern fiber network; a highly qualified team of IT professionals; local support teams; and an exceptional service level agreement (SLA) that gives you peace of mind.

Extensive K-12 education experience

Spectrum Enterprise has dedicated education experts helping hundreds of school systems nationwide plan and realize their IT vision.

Top-notch talent working for you

We recruit and train highly qualified network technicians, acting as an extension of your IT team to help you keep pace with the speed of innovation. Our team includes 1,200+ MEF certified professionals and specialists on call at all hours — freeing your staff to focus on more strategic IT initiatives.

24/7/365 protection

We work around the clock to keep your network running smoothly and protect you from the latest cyber threats, so teaching and learning can continue uninterrupted by network downtime.

To learn more about how Spectrum Enterprise managed services can help your schools, visit enterprise.spectrum.com/K12ed.

1. "K-12 Bandwidth Goals," EducationSuperHighway, 2021.
2. "EdTech Leadership Survey Report 2021," Consortium for School Networking, 2021.
3. Ibid.
4. "K-12 Bandwidth Goals," EducationSuperHighway, 2021.
5. "EdTech Leadership Survey Report 2021," Consortium for School Networking, 2021.
6. Ibid.
7. "The Cornerstones of IT Managed Services," Entech.

About Spectrum Enterprise

Spectrum Enterprise, a part of Charter Communications, Inc., is a national provider of scalable, fiber technology solutions serving many of America's largest businesses and communications service providers. The broad Spectrum Enterprise portfolio includes [networking and managed services solutions: Internet access, Ethernet access and networks, Voice and TV solutions](#). The Spectrum Enterprise team of experts works closely with clients to achieve greater business success by providing solutions designed to meet their evolving needs. For more information, visit enterprise.spectrum.com.