Securing the Digital Classroom:

A Texas School District Leverages RapidIdentity to Be Future-Ready

At a glance

Organization:
New Caney ISD

Industry:
K-12 Education

Location:
Montgomery County, TX

What New Caney Needed:

- Simplified secure provisioning for 10,000+ devices

- Streamlined solution for network device configuration and user management

- Reliable 24/7 access to cloud-based applications

Results with RapidIdentity:

- Innovative technology-based instructional tools and Project-Based Learning (PBL) in a secure environment

- Active engagement of students and parents

- Collaborative, blended learning experiences

The Business Challenge

New Caney Transforms Students' Learning Experiences with Identity Automation's Secure Solution

When Dustin Hardin became the Director of Technology for New Caney ISD in 2011, he arrived with ambitious goals: he wanted to implement 21st century teaching methodologies in the form of digitized learning and ongoing student-teacher engagement. To get there, Hardin created a program called 1:Vision, with the goal of issuing a laptop to each student in grades 3 through 12— nearly 10,000 students.

But implementing this vision would be far from simple, and would require New Caney, about 30 miles northeast of Houston, to thoroughly modernize its technology systems. When Hardin joined the district, students used a shared username and password to log into the district's legacy computer platform. New Caney would have to implement a wireless network and establish and manage individual user accounts so the district could protect student privacy and securely limit access to approved third-party and cloud-based applications.

IDENTITY AUTOMATION

Beyond these critical steps, Harden wanted 1:Vision to foster increased student-teacher engagement. That meant educators and students would need a social platform and email accounts for easy interaction.

Hardin quickly came to the conclusion that New Caney would need a new technology platform and partner to help it meet these objectives. Ultimately, he found one that was more than capable of handling each of them.

RapidIdentity Solves the Problem

After researching and consulting with peers, Hardin chose Identity Automation's RapidIdentity solution as the platform for his updated system. The powerful solution has helped school districts and enterprises throughout the nation provide easy provisioning and management of accounts, as well as controlled Internet access and privacy protection with a Secure Single Sign-On (SSO) solution. It was an ideal fit for New Caney.

Because of the amount of change he planned to introduce, Hardin developed a carefully considered plan that rolled out the system to different audiences over time. First, he worked with Identity Automation implementation experts to use RapidIdentity's built-in tools to migrate New Caney's current directory, which included all administrative and staff members, from its existing Novell platform to Microsoft Active Directory, which gave it greater flexibility for user authentication and authorization.

"Across the board, students and teachers love it."

-Dustin Hardin, Director of Technology, New Caney ISD

Then, during the following summer, Hardin's IT department rolled out user accounts to teachers. The final step came the next summer, after teachers had been trained and were thoroughly familiar with the system, when New Caney's students were issued their own individual accounts.

At the same time, Hardin also provided secure access to Google Gmail through RapidIdentity, giving students and teachers a secure platform for engagement. Before the summer was over, New Caney teachers were assigned Gmail accounts and Google Chrome laptops. Students received their own laptops and tablets in time for the 2014-2015 school year, and teachers—asked by the district to find new ways to engage their pupils—have been finding creative ways to incorporate the new technology into day-to-day learning.

IDENTITY AUTOMATION

A+ Results with Identity Automation

Today, the digitized, collaborative learning that Hardin envisioned is a reality. New Caney students have secure access to the district network from any location, and they're using it every chance they get.

"Students are taking notes, backed up on the cloud," Hardin said. "They share documents and communicate with each other. On the weekends, students are doing homework and engaging with teachers. It's all-the-time learning."

Implementing Project-Based Learning District Wide. With Identity Automation's RapidIdentity, New Caney ISD progressed from a school district with no wireless network — and no way to implement one securely — to a district that not only has wireless capabilities, but also is able to ensure safe, controlled student usage. As a result, New Caney has been able to digitize the teaching process, radically transform its curriculum, and pave the way for another district goal: the implementation of project-based learning.

Preparing Students for their Technological Future. RapidIdentity made it possible for New Caney ISD to protect students' privacy and monitor students' network activity by issuing unique user accounts. This technology allowed New Caney to successfully implement a one-to-one laptop initiative that gives students the solid technological foundation they'll need for success in college and the workplace.

Empowering Teachers Through Technology Through RapidIdentity's self-service feature, teachers can now reset student passwords in the classroom. This capability has allowed New Caney's IT team to advance beyond the campaign to digitize the school district and focus on new strategic efforts.

Saving Time and Resources New Caney's technological transformation, made possible through RapidIdentity, has reduced IT workload by 80%.

Learn how Identity Automation can help your organization streamline identity management and boost security with single sign-on: **www.identityautomation.com**