

Redefine learning with ConnectED

Crane School District

YUMA, AZ



Making the vision a reality

Tucked into the southwest corner of Arizona's desert, Crane School District is one of two K-8 districts in Yuma. It has a very low socioeconomic population, with 100 percent of its students eligible for free or reduced lunch. Among the poorest districts in the country, Crane leaders were committed to locating additional funds to help support their dream of providing essential technological learning resources for their students. Thanks to the Apple ConnectED program, a President Barack Obama initiative to provide 99 percent of America's students access to educational devices that are connected to the internet through high-speed broadband and high-speed wireless within five years, their dream became a reality.



THE ROAD TO A DREAM COME TRUE

While Crane's leadership recognized the need for technology in the classroom, funding held back their vision. Diminishing state dollars meant thinking outside the box and hoping financial assistance would come along. It did. In 2014, Apple invited Crane to apply for the ConnectED grants. Realizing the magnitude of what that could mean for their district, they hired a grant writer and applied. Their acceptance to the program changed everything.

"Not only did the grants support the eight schools that received the ConnectED devices," said Trina Siegfried, ConnectED project manager, Crane School District, "but then the district's limited resources could be focused toward our remaining two schools, which allowed us to expand the program districtwide in 24 months."

AT A GLANCE



Crane School District serves 6,500 students in 11 schools

1 IT person manages nearly 7,000 devices with Jamf

iPad program gives low-income students access to technology

Formative testing identifies potential gaps in learning before they happen

Transformed from a 100 percent Windows environment to a full Apple ecosystem in 24 months

Saved \$10,000 alone by using's Jamf's inventory capabilities

“When we started on the adventure of ConnectED, we knew we had students with real needs. We knew we couldn’t meet the needs with the resources we had, and we had to reach out for help. Fortunately, our partners in ConnectED answered the call.”

Trina Siegfried,
ConnectED project manager,
Crane School District



The iPad rollout meant a lot to the students – more than Siegfried imagined. She told the story of a young girl who clutched an iPad to her chest, and in an emotional state, said she never thought she’d have an iPad of her own. She said another student, who suffered from a social anxiety disorder, began participating in class and engaging with other students – something he’d never done. “It was amazing to see the iPad open a window to the world for him,” Siegfried commented. “He now feels empowered to communicate with those around him, sparked by the safe use of an iPad in his classroom.”



CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

Prior to receiving the ConnectED grants, Crane was a 100 percent Windows district. But understanding the power of the iPad and what it could do for their students, they adopted the Apple platform and Jamf to manage the devices. Now in its second full year, it’s clear how the implementation has changed how teachers teach and students learn.

“Teachers are now able to do a lot more project-based learning. There’s more than just substitution happening in the classroom,” said Mike Hoffman, director of curriculum and instructional technology, Crane School District. “We’re ramping up the way iPads are becoming more integral into instruction, rather than just digital paper.”

Kirt Gordon, a third-grade teacher in the district, explained the depth and breadth of iPad usage in the classroom. “The devices allow the students to get much more hands-on material in one place,” he said. “So it’s almost limitless what it can do.” At any given hour, Gordon’s students participate in a wide range of activities on their devices, from coding to using a magnifying glass add-on to identify seeds. “They really do enjoy it, so they kind of automatically learn as they go,” he said. The iPads are also creating equally engaging experiences outside the classroom.



TRANSFORMATIONAL EDUCATION AT WORK

At one of the district's elementary schools, students in grades four through six manage Knox Farm – Our Garden of Learning – all with the help of their iPads. On the plot of land located on school grounds, the students are responsible for the full lifecycle of the garden, growing around 20 varieties of crops each year. There are crop managers, along with students who monitor the irrigation, any pest infestations and more. Their devices allow them to research bugs, document plant growth and even provide year-end Keynotes on their success.

“It’s opened their eyes to things around them,” said Ann Ogram, garden supervisor and fifth grade teacher, Crane School District. “And I’ve definitely seen an increase in healthiness. Students are making better choices as far as what they’re consuming.”

Their work in the garden is also changing the perceptions of those who mean the most to them – their parents. Many of Yuma’s residents are field workers. And while the students understood what their parents did at a high level, it was only after spending time in the garden that they began to respect their work.

“Our students are now seeing their agricultural parents as experts, so it’s building better relationships,” Siegfried said. “And as part of ConnectED, Apple blessed our program with an outdoor access point (AP).” She explained that having access to the internet while in the garden means students can have real-time, meaningful interactions with their parents about an area of common interest.

Sixth-grade student, Clarissa, took a break from thinning the garden and harvesting carrots to explain what it all meant to her. She said, “A lot of us – we love the garden! We love sharing with other people about our experiences. And we really hope that other people will get the knowledge and the creativity to grow their own garden, because it’s really fun to have that responsibility.” A transformational education success.



FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS; PROVEN RESULTS

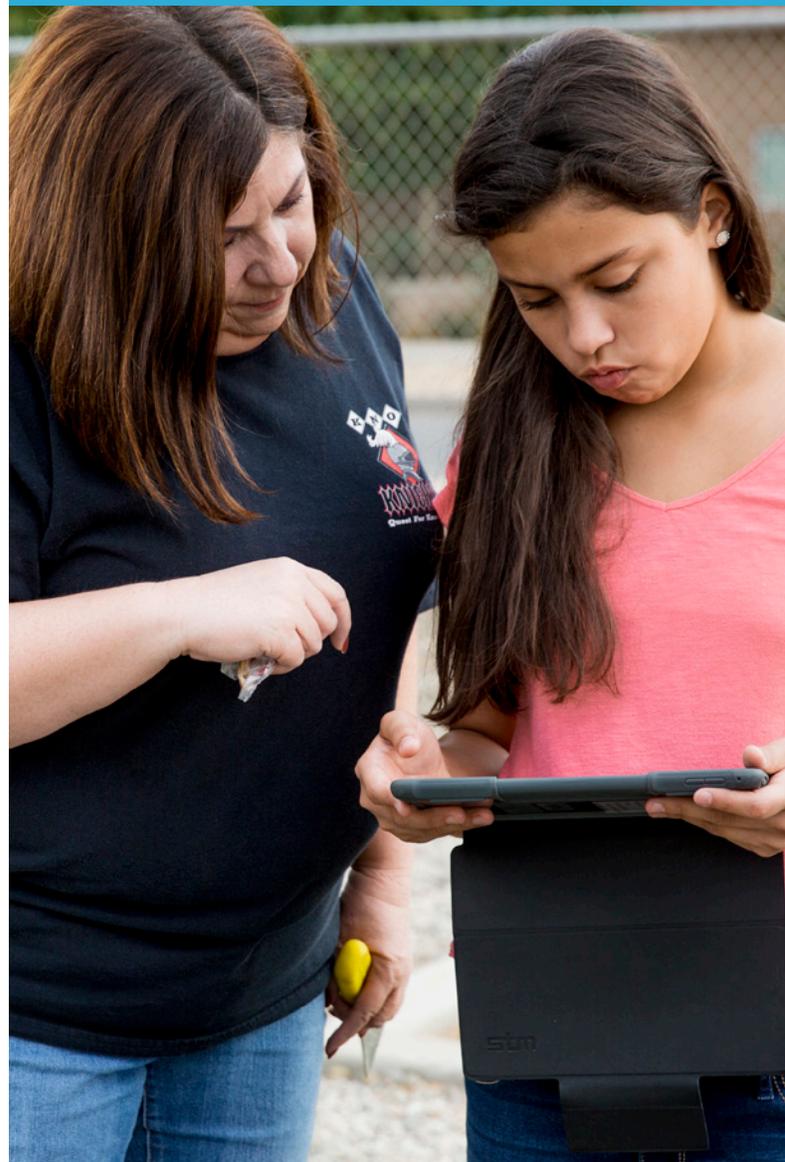
There are many parts that must work together to create a successful iPad program. Siegfried said testing in thoughtful, strategic ways is a piece of the puzzle that can't be forgotten. "Formative assessments have really allowed for us, in real-time, to set up success opportunities and additional learning opportunities for students who are excelling, as well as for students who are struggling," she said. Such formative snapshots allow teachers to quickly identify their students' learning gaps and reteach material, as needed, so they don't fall behind.

With the iPads, Crane performs thousands of formative assessments each year, all of which take less than five percent of total classroom time. "By being able to pre-test, we don't waste time in the classroom," Siegfried said. "Instead of teaching an entire lesson before testing, a quick five-minute formative assessment informs educators if students are grasping the current concept. Then using that information, they can modify lessons to more appropriately meet the students' needs." And it's working.

In a recent study of student academic growth in more than 10,000 classrooms nationwide, Crane's fourth grade students outpaced comparable students by demonstrating 50 percent more growth in science, math and English language arts. "Ultimately, we do what we do to increase student achievement," Siegfried said. "We believe that we're on the right path, and our partners in ConnectED are a huge part of the growth we're seeing in our kids every day."

"We know what school would look like without the iPads, and it's not good. Students would be shortchanged of a robust education."

Mike Hoffman,
Curriculum & Instructional Technology director,
Crane School District





THE PATH TO SUSTAINABILITY

Crane's iPad program allows their students to take virtual tours around the world. "Many of these kids will never leave Yuma county," Siegfried explained. "Most of them don't have cars or the financial resources to get to Disneyland, even though it's only five hours away." But through the iPad, she said, they can visit anytime they'd like. And they do. It's something Siegfried can't imagine losing. Unfortunately, she doesn't know how to sustain the program without help.

Crane is halfway through their three-year ConnectED grants – grants that provided not only the iPads, but also valuable professional development training and infrastructure from Apple. And managing their 7,000 devices without Jamf isn't something Siegfried wants to contemplate. "Jamf is very powerful. It's terrifying to think that we could be in a situation where we're trying to figure out how to manage all these pieces without it." She described it as a journey.

"We are building a ship in hopes that the ship is going to take us to a new frontier, a new platform for learning that is more successful. ConnectED has brought the right partners to the table at the right time with the same vision, with mutual desires to see public education be what we know it can be," Siegfried said. "What started out as an initiative or a program has become our culture – using all available resources to provide every student the best opportunity and resources to learn. And Jamf is a partner in that." So while Crane leadership continues to strategize ways to sustain the program and this new culture, Siegfried hopes continued support is in their future – for their district and for their students.



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