



Idaho's Blackfoot School District Wields Mobile Technologies and Seamless Connectivity to Spark Ingenuity and Innovation

Blackfoot School District No. 55 (Blackfoot), located in the southeast corner of Idaho, is reimagining its learning environments to cultivate capable and future-ready learners. Providing its students with accessibility to online educational resources and tools is a key component of the district's strategy.

"Digital technology opens the door to an abundance of valuable information," says Ryan Wilson, the district's technology director and assistant superintendent. "Our district understands the importance of reliable Internet accessibility in today's classrooms, and we work hard to remain ahead of the curve so that our students and staff can reach information as quickly and efficiently as possible."

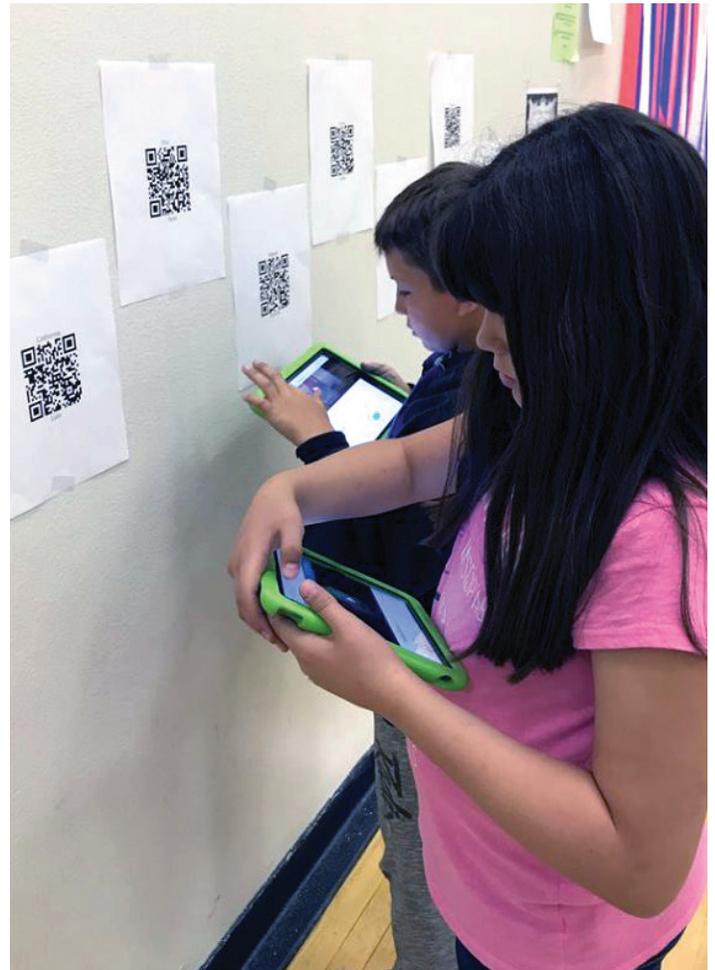
Partnering for Wireless Innovation

In order to provide its 4,000-plus students with high-speed, campus-wide Internet access, Blackfoot recently decided to overhaul the district's wireless infrastructure. However, like Wilson, many of Blackfoot's staff members wear more than one hat and are extremely busy.

"Of the devices in our district, more than half are wireless—and that doesn't include student devices," says Eric Smith, a district computer technology specialist. "On our own, we do not have the capacity to manage and maintain a wireless network that is both affordable and capable of supporting every wireless device in our district."

To address this challenge, the district searched for a vendor that would not only upgrade its network but also manage its wireless network. For Blackfoot, however, not just any Wi-Fi solution—or vendor—would do. Blackfoot's commitment to quality and innovation has guided every phase of the district's technology transformation, beginning with its journey to find the right Wi-Fi provider.

Smith recalls that, in the beginning, it was difficult to find a technology partner that would develop a custom solution to meet the district's unique needs. "Most Wi-Fi providers only ask generic questions about the number and size of classrooms," says Smith. "After that, they just install an access point in every classroom and assume that those points will work together in that environment. What you're left



with intermittent service from one end of a hall to the other because the access points are not configured to meet your specific needs. If your district has buildings that have issues with connectivity, and you install access points that overlap or don't communicate properly, then the wireless service is essentially useless."

Determined to move beyond a one-size-fits-all wireless network, Blackfoot partnered with ENA to deploy ENA Air, ENA's tailored Wi-Fi solution.

Designing Excellence

Prior to implementation, ENA engineers worked alongside Blackfoot's technology team to perform a customized Wi-Fi assessment and design a tailored, scalable network to meet the district's evolving needs.

"ENA came on-site, wire mapped and heat mapped our buildings, and designed a customized infrastructure—which means we got just the right number of access points in all the right places," says Smith. "Plus, as we add new devices, ENA works with us to identify any needed changes to support increased usage. The reality is that school districts have to spend money where we need to and save money where we can, and ENA's managed Wi-Fi service helps us do that."

With support from ENA's certified and experienced Wi-Fi engineers, Blackfoot has taken the guesswork out of its technology initiatives.

"An experienced vendor makes a world of difference," says Wilson. "It's important to partner with a Wi-Fi provider that understands the unique circumstances school districts face, such as the need for increased bandwidth during a crowded, phone-filled event in the gymnasium. With a knowledgeable partner like ENA, my IT team doesn't have to guess about what will work and what won't."

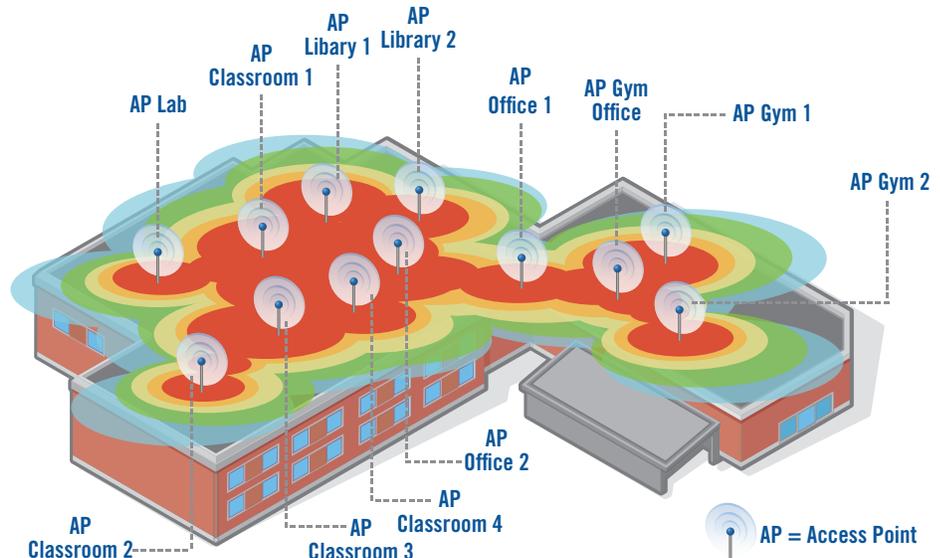
Leveraging Educational Technology to Inspire Curiosity and Discovery

Blackfoot's robust wireless infrastructure now supports the district's advanced wireless technology as well as a growing influx of student devices, allowing both students and teachers to work, collaborate, and stream anywhere on campus. "Students have access to a computer in every classroom, and many bring their own devices," says Wilson. "With ENA Air, our devices stay up and running—even when streaming—which enables our students to remain connected at all times."

Today, Blackfoot's classrooms are hubs for digital exploration and collaboration, and district leaders credit educational technology for the district's boost in student achievement. "Since introducing classroom technologies several years ago, our district's classroom instruction has transformed from dry erase boards and PowerPoints to online presentations and live collaboration," says Smith. "Teachers and students alike now rely on technology to discover new information and communicate with peers. Without this technology, we could not achieve such significant student success."

Dedicated Support for Every Initiative

Blackfoot's wireless network is managed by ENA and backed by ENA's dedicated, 24x7x365 customer support team, which means the district's IT team can now focus on other emerging technology needs. "If we have an issue with our technology, whether it's a weak spot or devices that aren't connecting, we



call the ENA CTAC,” says Smith. “Within minutes, a customer support engineer will identify the issue, and, if needed, ENA will have a more robust device back online within a day—a device that our team does not have to plug in, configure, or control. With one call to ENA, I can resolve an incident in half an hour rather than half a day. This gives us the time to work on more pressing issues.”

A New Voice Platform

Most recently, the district’s more pressing issues included an outdated phone system that prevented district staff from dialing and transferring calls between buildings. Seeking an experienced, trusted partner to replace the district’s failing PBX systems, Blackfoot selected ENA to deploy ENA SmartVoice, ENA’s fully managed, cloud-based VoIP solution.

“When our antiquated phone system began to fail, we looked at district-wide replacement, which wasn’t cost-effective,” says Wilson. “It quickly became apparent that we couldn’t afford 13 phone systems and handsets, and ENA worked with us to create an affordable solution. With ENA SmartVoice, we just have to purchase the phones and pay a low monthly fee—with no additional hardware costs.”

Continuing the Digital Transformation

ENA’s fully managed and reliable technology solutions afford district leaders the time and resources to envision the future of technology in Blackfoot. The district’s next initiative: digital citizenship.

“We want our students to take ownership of their digital presence while keeping themselves safe,” says Wilson. “An important part of educational technology is making sure students know how to harness the power of technology for good.”



Wilson sees no end in sight for Blackfoot’s digital journey, and he and other district leaders are busy preparing students, staff, and district facilities to take full advantage of the next wave of innovative technology.

To learn more about how ENA can assist your school district with its digital initiatives, email solutions@ena.com or visit www.ena.com.

About ENA by Zayo

ENA delivers transformative connectivity, communication, cloud, cybersecurity, and technology services. Our 99% customer satisfaction rating and world class net promoter score (NPS) demonstrate our commitment to delivering exceptional customer care. For more information, please visit www.ena.com, call 866-615-1101, or e-mail info@ena.com.

