

Tech with a Purpose

How Hamilton City School District and VARtek are building strong foundations for learning

At Hamilton City School District, technology-powered education is helping students grow.

Like most districts, HCSD faces unique obstacles to achieving its educational goals: 72% of students live in poverty. The district serves 42% more students with limited English proficiency than similar districts serve—113% more than the statewide average.

Despite these challenges, HCSD does not compromise its vision of enabling all students to maximize their individual potential. The district's dedication to preparing its students for academic and professional careers is reflected in its commitment to integrate modern learning technology into the classroom.

“The tech director should be rooted in and focused on instruction. They can do that when they work with a company that makes sure everything works.”

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP DECISIONS

When Hamilton City School District began construction on several school buildings in 2009, district leadership recognized that adequate technology planning and support were beyond the capabilities of the internal IT staff. HCSD turned to VARtek, a technology leadership, staffing, and services provider focused exclusively on serving schools—with the following objectives:

Integrate technology into education

“We wanted to bring instruction into the 21st century,” said a Hamilton district administrator. Among other things, that meant connecting paperless assignment management, grading, discussion, and collaboration capabilities for students and educators.

Put devices into students' hands

To achieve its objectives, Hamilton City School District needed a plan that gave students access to computers. It sounds simple, but giving students technology without the right preparation and support is a recipe for chaos. Success requires reliable wireless infrastructure, effective training, and efficient support systems.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The district's decision to partner with VARtek has paid measurable dividends.

- The creation of a universal help desk has simplified the process of resolving tech issues. Staffed by trained VARtek technicians during all school hours, the help desk is the go-to resource for everything from burned-out lightbulbs to wireless connectivity issues.

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The Help Desk

- 35% reduction in ticket backlog
- Nearly 50% of issues resolved remotely



- Transitioning from stationary desktop computers in labs to less-expensive, mobile Chromebooks for students, HCSD has achieved a 2-to-1 student-to-device ratio across the district. The district plans to move to a 1-to-1 environment in the next three years.
- VARtek's IT team trains and supports educators in the use of Google Classroom, giving teachers and students an easy-to-use system for sharing assignments, learning resources, grades, and more.
- The day-to-day support services are running more smoothly, as evidenced by a 35% reduction in ticket backlog. The robust ticketing system implemented by VARtek provides transparency and a straightforward way to verify that closed tickets are truly resolved.

In terms of success factors, the Hamilton administrator pointed to VARtek's expertise,

communication, and accountability. His weekly meetings with VARtek's on-site director, Dan Malloy, paired with a steady cadence of structured feedback, give him full transparency regarding VARtek's execution of their jointly developed plan.

Malloy describes one element of VARtek's ongoing mission as keeping Hamilton's staff "out of the weeds." The VARtek team is passionate about providing the entire staff with the freedom to focus on setting vision and direction for educational strategies.

On the subject of VARtek's support, Hamilton leadership explained that "You can be innovative and creative, but if you don't have the people behind you to execute, you will end up with a mess. You are only as good as the people you hire, and VARtek hires good people."

In the end, what matters is helping students grow. With VARtek, Hamilton City School District is focused on just that—the strategies and tools that help students and educators work together.

