



CASE STUDY

Polk County Schools Get Up and Running in Two Days with Lightspeed Systems®; Applauds Incredibly Fast Implementation

CHALLENGE

The mission of Polk County Public Schools (PCPS) is to provide a high quality education for all students. To accomplish this, PCPS implemented an edtech program to foster the development of complex thinking and problem solving skills.

Polk County Schools has 106,000 students in the district, but only 56% of students had access to a device at home. When the district pivoted to support remote learning, they ran into a problem—deploying thousands of school-owned devices while maintaining student safety online. CIPA and e-rate funding requirements meant that each take-home device needed the same protection from harmful content that schools were providing with their on-campus web filter.

To tackle this challenge, PCPS sought after a cloud-based solution that was quick and easy to deploy, and would reliably filter school-owned devices on- or off-campus.

SOLUTION

The district chose Lightspeed Filter™ to quickly and completely filter the 23,000 school-owned devices that were distributed. A cloud-based filter that's fast and easy to deploy, Lightspeed Filter decrypts SSL traffic without proxy, operates on every OS, and keeps students safe online with smart features, whenever and wherever. Implementation of the filter cleared one of the biggest hurdles in a remote learning plan: keeping students safe online on a school-owned device.



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– Dr. Tina Barrios, Assistant Superintendent of Information Systems and Technology



"We did not have a filter in place for take-home devices, so we had to get a solution for that very quickly," says Polk County Schools Assistant Superintendent of Information Systems and Technology, Dr. Tina Barrios."

That's where Lightspeed really stepped up and worked closely with us to get the filter up and running as fast as possible." She adds, "Filtering our devices was one of the biggest hurdles for us to overcome and the easiest hurdle that we did overcome with the help of Lightspeed Systems. It was amazing to me how quickly—within one to two days of having conversations—that we were able to get this up and running and set up on multiple platforms."

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RESULTS

"From the time Lightspeed activated our licenses, we had our filter policies in place in under a day," Barrios notes. "Thanks to the quick set-up, the flexible platform's capacity for changes on the fly, and the phenomenal support we got from the Lightspeed team, this solution solved every problem we had with filtering take-home devices."

Aside from rapid deployment and ease of use, the filter has provided the district with access to greater visibility into student web activity than previously experienced. "The daily web activity report measures student activity online, so we can see what percentage of their time they're spending on educational sites versus non-educational sites, which is *huge* for remote learning," says Barrios. "The reporting feature has been extremely helpful, and we've been using it every single day."

Another benefit of Lightspeed Filter is its ability to track devices via IP address. Having sent out 23,000 devices to students across the district, Barrios sees the value in knowing exactly where those devices are. "The device tracking has been a huge help when you're very quickly handing out lots and lots of devices for students to take home."

Perhaps the most valuable feature of Lightspeed Filter is the ease in which you can manage and update the filter policies to fit the exact needs of the district. "Our previous filter didn't allow for us to make changes the way Lightspeed does," says Barrios. "With a district of our size and diversity in students who live in a rural versus an urban area, the ability to make changes to our filtering policy and update device policies remotely is one of the most valuable features of the filter."

Having an effective and trustworthy cloud filtering solution in place is essential to maintain and scale a remote learning initiative. "I'm thankful for Lightspeed—they were a *lifesaver* for us."

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