

## Case Study: Webster Central School District

# Webster Central School District Increases Accurate Reports by 30% with Lightspeed Systems®

## Webster Central School District

New York

Customer Since  
2017

Students  
8,528

Grades  
PreK-12

Staff Members  
1,400

Devices Used  
Windows Laptops  
Chromebooks  
iPads

Products Used  
Lightspeed Filter™

Webster Central School District serves over 8,000 students, 1,800 faculty members, and has been a true 1:1 since 2017. As any K-12 Tech professional knows, initiating, operating, and scaling a true 1:1 where every student takes home a device is no easy feat. Potential problems with 1:1 programs range from instructional issues like keeping students engaged when they aren't in a physical classroom to technical problems such as tracking school-owned devices, and making sure kids are safe online when they aren't on the campus network. That's why Brian Zimmer, Director of Educational Technology and Information at Webster CSD relies on the most powerful cloud-based web filter, [Lightspeed Filter™](#).

## Transitioning to the Cloud

Lightspeed Filter is a multi-OS, cloud-based filter that utilizes the power typically associated with a filtering appliance. Zimmer notes, "It's the easiest and most reliable filter I've ever used. The reports are amazing and so simple to use! I am so glad that we moved to this product."

Webster had originally been a Lightspeed Customer when they filtered traffic on the campus network through the Lightspeed Rocket inline filter. When Webster decided to move to a 1:1 program, Zimmer's team became responsible for the District's 3,000+ Chromebooks, 2,000 iPads, and 1,400 Windows laptops whether they were on or off campus. It was immediately apparent that an inline filter wouldn't do the job, and he needed to find a cloud-filtering solution, quick.

Zimmer tested several competing filters, but none of them could accommodate the filtering and reporting needs of Webster. But then he met with Lightspeed at a trade show and decided on the spot to move to the Lightspeed Systems Web Filter. Lightspeed's cloud-based filter now filters, tracks, and reports on all of Webster's 1:1 devices. "We needed a major upgrade back in 2017 to support having all of these devices," says Zimmer. "We used the Rocket at first, and then when we met with the Lightspeed team I immediately said 'We're in, we're going to try it' and have never looked back since because it's such a great product."

When testing competing filter solutions, Zimmer found that they just didn't compare with Lightspeed Filter, especially when it came to reporting. "The reporting is much more accurate from Lightspeed than we saw with competing solutions. We don't see as many false positives for self-harm cases coming out of Lightspeed because of the strength of the filter," said Zimmer. "We're getting better, more accurate reports with Lightspeed."

Looking at the data provided by the companies, Zimmer was able to see that Lightspeed reported 30% fewer false positives of self-harm and suicide cases than competing filters.

This type of reporting is an essential anytime, but especially so during campus closures caused by COVID -19. Zimmer reflects on one instance where a report from Lightspeed Filter was critical in saving a student's life.

"We had a notification from a report one day where the student was actually contemplating suicide, and because of Lightspeed we were able to make some really quick decisions to support them and make sure they were okay during these last few months of COVID," Zimmer says. "The filter has been instrumental in this aspect. When we're talking life and death with kids, the program is really reliable."

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## Making Web Filtering Easy

Lightspeed Filter not only allows Zimmer to make sure that his students are safe – it also makes time consuming tasks like generating reports, blocking sites, and tracking devices easier to manage. This allows Zimmer and his team to focus their time on cases that need direct attention. "We would get requests from administrators asking what certain students are up to every day," Zimmer says. "Now I can just send them reports on exactly what the kids are doing online instead of pulling the data myself. I just send the report and the detail history export to the administrator, and they can share it with the kids' parents without adding me to the mix." In terms of how much time this has saved his team, Zimmer says the difference is immeasurable. "The differences are huge. We can focus on individual cases that need direct attention versus spending all of our time pulling shallow data."

The ease of use doesn't just apply to data and reports. The filter's actionable dashboard makes updating policies a cinch. "The ease of use is unbelievable!" Zimmer exclaims. "If I need to make a quick change for a student or for protocol based on an update to FERPA or NY Ed Law 2D, it's fast, it's easy, it's not a painstaking process. I can't say enough about how easy it is to manage from an administrative side."

Lightspeed Filter is also very accessible, allowing for management anywhere, anytime. "I can jump in from any device anywhere and make updates," Zimmer laughs. "I've even done it from my phone and from an iPad before!"

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**-Brian Zimmer, Director of Educational Technology and Information**

## Superior Support

As a former customer, Zimmer knew that support at Lightspeed was unparalleled; however, the level of care and attention he received during Webster's move to Lightspeed Filter and ever since has "blown him away."

"What I really appreciate is that Lightspeed is very responsive to our needs," he says. "We'll put in requests sometime at 6, 7 a.m., and someone always gets back to us within the hour. There's always somebody there to support us."

Zimmer remembers one time where Lightspeed took support a step further and met with his team in person. "We had some minor challenges earlier last year and some of the product developers actually flew out to Rochester and met with the representatives from local districts. Almost all of our feedback was taken and implemented in the recent product updates. You don't get that type of personalized service from other companies."

When he reflected on the move to Lightspeed Filter from the Lightspeed Rocket, Zimmer has no regrets. "This program is awesome," he says. "I would promote it to anyone. I don't have to think about whether this is the best solution for Webster; I know it is."

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