

Case Study: Nye County School District

Lightspeed Systems® Keeps Nye School District Safe and Secure

Nye County School District

Pahrump, Nevada

Customer Since
2015

Students
5,933

Grades
K-12

Staff Members
323

Devices Used
Chromebooks
Windows

Products Used

Lightspeed Filter™

Lightspeed Alert™

Lightspeed Classroom Management™

Nye County School District serves over 5,000 students across 17 schools in Nevada. Like many K-12 IT employees, Director of Technology Robert Williams is part of a relatively small staff — at Nye, just four employees — with a wide variety of responsibilities.

“We handle all kinds of things including professional development, a big transition to G Suite, and all of the work orders that come in for technology,” Robert said. “We’re spread pretty thin.”

But, as every tech director with limited resources knows, device security and student safety must be top priorities.

Robert has worked in the Nye County School District for about 10 years. He transitioned to his new position a year ago, after nine years serving as principal, and his experience in administration has helped him immensely to understand instructional technology needs in schools. Robert has been spearheading the school’s initiative to apply grant funds and make the switch from computer labs and laptop carts to G Suite and Chromebooks.

As principal, Robert successfully rolled out 1:1 Chromebooks, and chose a similar strategy for other schools in the district.

Lightspeed Rocket™ to Lightspeed Filter™

The Nye County School District network has utilized [Lightspeed Rocket](#) appliances since 2015. Because of the Chromebook deployment at Nye, Robert needed a smart way to manage those new devices in the cloud.

Robert offered the idea to purchase a cart of Chromebooks for each teacher at one grade level. Then, as more money became available, more carts could be purchased for all teachers at another grade level.

“This creates ownership of the Chromebooks for the teachers who have an assigned cart, and improves integration and frequency of use because the teachers always have access to the devices,” he said.

As Chromebooks were integrated into instruction, IT encountered a challenge. Many students attempted to bypass the content filter with VPNs and proxies, and played games during class. Also, teachers struggled to monitor student devices during instruction.

“We’re routinely getting requests on, ‘Hey, can you check the search history of this student?’ And ‘Hey, there are some issues here. Is there a way to monitor Chromebooks the same way that we do with the computer labs?’” Robert explained.

When Robert researched Lightspeed and other solutions to secure a more advanced monitoring tool for the Chromebooks, [Lightspeed Filter](#) emerged as the winner for its robust features and cost. Lightspeed Filter is also powered by AWS, which allows for easy, fast, secure, and scalable cloud computing.

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Using Lightspeed Alert™ To Better Detect Self-Harm and Suicide Risk

Shortly after pushing the Lightspeed Filter extension to devices, Robert made a shocking discovery with the help of [Lightspeed Alert](#).

Lightspeed Alert is a core element of pinpointing suspicious behavior that may be something for IT and administration to take action on. IT can set custom flagged terms and phrases with corresponding danger levels, and receive real-time alerts.

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“Within the first week, we identified two students in one of the schools that were researching a suicide hotline,” Robert said.

Robert was able to notify the school principal of this activity so he could intervene to help the students, potentially saving their lives.

“It was a very positive thing that we were able to catch them and get them the help they need,” Robert said. Recently, Robert enabled Lightspeed Alert by user input rather than content scanning, which has led to a more accurate picture of student activity. By setting Lightspeed Alert based on what a student is actually typing (e.g., a student working on a Google Doc typing “suicide” vs. a page scan containing the word “suicide”), IT and Safety Officers gain more transparency about behavior observed on the device.

“When you’re talking about user input, it’s a lot easier to identify when there are issues. Plus, if we get a flag on [the word] ‘suicide’ and nothing indicates that in the user’s history but we know that the word suicide was used in a Google Doc, we can then get into the student’s account and take a look at those documents to see if there’s an issue,” he explained.

The VPN Battle and How Lightspeed Has Led to a Safer Network

Like many K-12 IT professionals, Robert was accustomed to students using VPNs to try to bypass the network filter.

Although Robert uses Google's Admin Console to prevent students from installing VPN software, he relies on Lightspeed to help identify the students who are researching how to get around the filter via VPN on other devices.

"With Lightspeed Filter, we can connect behavior to specific students, allowing us to bring in school administrators and teachers to address the behavior," Robert explained. "We still have a mixed environment with Chromebooks and Windows machines. Kids can still attempt to install VPNs on the Windows machines. Because we can connect behavior to specific students, we've been able to address some of the problems happening on Windows machines."

Thanks to Lightspeed, the IT team noticed many students researching information on how to access blocked content.

Due to this behavior, Robert and the team sent word to administrators. After administrators addressed those behavior issues, Robert's team saw a vast decrease in filter bypass attempts.

"We don't want kids to be punished, but we do want them to understand acceptable use of technology in schools and in the working world," he explained. "They also need to know they could lose their privileges on district technology if they continue [this behavior]."

Visibility in the Classroom

Robert's team of four has a lot on their plate to ensure the school's IT programs are running smoothly every day. But, he's still able to work closely with administration and teachers to provide critical data on student device use with the help of quick, actionable student use analytics from Lightspeed Filter.

With more visibility into student device use than ever, Robert can have productive conversations with teaching staff to better inform them of what's going on in their classrooms.

In the past, Robert set teachers up with instructions on how to use [Lightspeed Classroom Management™](#), which some teachers implemented. With the updates in Lightspeed Classroom, Robert is excited to see what new tools he can provide to teachers.

In Lightspeed Classroom Management, teachers gain powerful classroom management tools including the ability to monitor activity, insights into who's on track and who needs help, broadcasting teacher and student screens, controlling access to the internet and much more.

Moving forward, Nye plans to continue their 1:1 rollout and extend multi-OS Lightspeed Filter across the district. Sending devices home with students is on the radar for next year. With Lightspeed Filter's smart features, Nye School District is set up for complete technology success.

Schedule a Demo with Lightspeed Systems Today



[Demo Here](#)

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