

Jeff Davis County Schools modernizes a rural school district with Google Apps for Education and Chromebooks



About Jeff Davis County Schools

- <https://www.jeff-davis.k12.ga.us>
- Hazlehurst, Georgia
- 3,200 students

What they wanted to do

- Invest in technology while reducing overall maintenance costs
- Provide teachers and staff with the technology of their choice for collaboration and storage

What they did

- Launched Google Apps for Education district-wide
- Introduced 2,200 Chromebooks

What they accomplished

- Reduced maintenance and save time and money
- Increased productivity for students and teachers
- Created collaborative and more flexible learning experiences



About Jeff Davis County Schools

Located in Hazlehurst, Georgia, [Jeff Davis County Schools](#) is a rural, but technologically progressive, school district with more than 3,200 students and 400 teachers and staff. The school district aims to develop successful, productive citizens who make a positive contribution to society. Over the past few years, this mission has led IT and administrative staff to continuously seek out the best ways to empower students and teachers with the right tools. .

Challenge

The population of Jeff Davis County is just over 15,000. Like many rural districts, the schools face the challenge of making the most of the funding they receive. The district's IT and administrative team does its due diligence whenever investing in new tools, but when it came to [Google Apps for Education](#), much of this vetting was complete. Teachers and staff already used Gmail and Google Apps, and encouraged the district to standardize on Google.

"We make WiFi readily available on all of our campuses and encourage students to store their work in Google Drive. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Students are able to work on assignments in between classes and after school. They always have their information readily available."

—Keith Osburn, technology and special programs director, Jeff Davis County Schools

Solution

After a trial period of testing Google and Microsoft products, the IT team surveyed teachers and staff about the system they preferred. The results were unanimous for Google. In 2008, Jeff Davis County Schools launched Google Apps district-wide and introduced 2,200 [Chromebooks](#). Today, the school district considers itself a "Google ecosystem," with staff, teachers and students all using Google Apps to work in new ways.

Benefits

Reducing maintenance to save time and money district-wide

The school district's IT team finds Chromebooks and Google Apps easy to maintain, which saves valuable time and resources.

"Before Google, it would take our IT service team 21 days to close a service ticket," says Keith Osburn, technology and special programs director at Jeff Davis County Schools. "Now, it only takes three hours or less and we have decreased the overall amount of tickets that come in."

Reduced maintenance and the low retail cost of Chromebooks — a third of the price of a laptop or PC — means that the school can afford to purchase and manage enough devices for all teachers and students to use.



The ease of using Google Apps has also reduced staff technology training. The original decision to move to Google came from teachers and staff themselves, many of whom already owned Android phones and used Google Apps daily. Instead of taking up valuable teacher time for time-consuming technology training, the IT team only needs 30 minutes to train a new teacher on Google.

“Before Google, it would take our IT service team 21 days to close a service ticket. Now, it only takes our service team three hours or less to close out a ticket and we have decreased the overall amount of tickets that come in. This encourages our teaching staff to implement more technology in the classroom, now that they trust that the technology is reliable that any issues can be solved quickly.”

—Keith Osburn, technology and special programs director, Jeff Davis County Schools

Bringing the cloud into play beyond the classroom (and out of the park)

Jeff Davis doesn't only use technology for traditional classroom activities, but they have incorporated Google tools on the field too.

With Google for Education tools, coaches at Jeff Davis now digitally record and keep track of the high school baseball team's pitch speeds and number of pitches to make sure a pitcher isn't throwing too many pitches. A member of the tech staff reads the pitch speed from a radar gun and enters the number into a Google Sheet using a **Chromebook**. Another Chromebook is connected to a TV in the dugout, so the coaches can monitor the speed and number of pitches thrown. With the sharing feature, the tech staff and coaches are able to view the same information that's being edited in real time.

Coaches now have more information to make more informed decisions about their players. “If a pitcher has thrown too many pitches or hit pitch speed begins to decrease, the coach can determine if the pitcher needs to be taken out of the game and a relief is sent in,” says Keith Osburn.

Creating flexible learning experiences

Teachers at Jeff Davis County Schools use the cloud to collaborate with students in and outside the classroom. “In the past, if you walked into a classroom and saw the teacher sitting at his or her desk, that wasn't a good thing. Now, that's a great scenario as it means students are getting real-time feedback from teachers on assignments shared in the cloud,” Osburn says.

Teachers at Jeff Davis also use **Google Forms** to quiz students after a lesson and instantly understand what they learned — a process that used to be manual, and would often take days, if not weeks. With more updated information, teachers can make adjustments to the lesson that day. “I use Google Forms frequently in my 7th Grade ELA classes,” says Lisa Yarbrough, 7th Grade teacher at Jeff Davis, “When I give my semester test on Google Forms, students receive their final test grade over email as soon as they finish. This way I immediately see how each student is doing on the test and find out which questions are missed most frequently — and so do the students.”

At Jeff Davis County Schools, the IT and administrative staff believes strongly in partnering with teachers to invest in technology solutions they trust and enjoy using. “We didn't want to push our teaching staff to use software or technology that they couldn't rely on,” Osburn says. “That hasn't been an issue with Google.”

Google for Education

A solution built for learning and designed for the classroom that includes easy-to-manage, affordable devices like Chromebooks, productivity tools like Google Apps for Education with Classroom, and limitless educational content in Google Play for Education. Together these tools help teachers inspire curiosity, while students learn better together, wherever they are.
