

Open data standards: How Lee County ensures digital learning access from day one

ClassLink helps Florida school district adopt more digital learning resources through greater data interoperability

Three years ago, Rob Stratton was seeking a way to simplify access to online resources for more than 93,000 students and 11,000 staff in Florida's Lee County School District. Stratton, who is the coordinator for K12 instructional technology for Lee County, wanted students and teachers to spend less time managing accounts through the district's website and more time using instructional software in the classroom.

"We spent more time talking about how to log in and not enough time about how to use the resources," Stratton says. ClassLink offered a simple solution for Lee County.

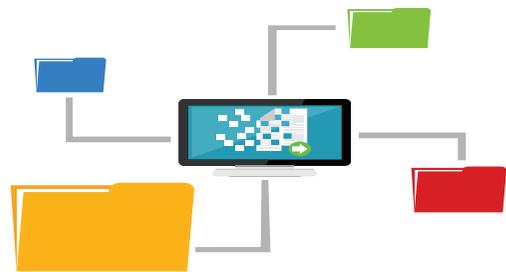
ClassLink is a single sign-on solution that empowers students and teachers with one-click access to more than 5,000 learning applications and instant links to file folders at school and on Google, Office 365, and Dropbox cloud drives. ClassLink also offers Roster Server, which provides easy and secure delivery of class rosters to all digital learning resources using open data standards and is certified by IMS Global Learning Consortium.

Valuable relationship

Stratton says that ClassLink was first purchased and rolled out to middle schools three years ago, when the district moved to a 1-to-1 model, and high schools and elementary schools were added over the past two years. The district's previous web learning portal did not make resources easily accessible, and there were often login issues due to multiple passwords. Stratton says ClassLink's single sign-on solution manages up to 80,000 logins daily, and there has been a corresponding rise in student use of the district's learning applications.

Stratton adds that ClassLink has worked with Lee County as a valuable partner.

"We wanted to have a partnership with a company that we can grow with," Stratton says. "Having a relationship with ClassLink that allows us to provide input into product design and simplified workloads was key to us."



Front-line tool for access

Stratton says that he establishes a target date before the school year for all new products and vendors to integrate with ClassLink and accept IMS Global open standards for rostering. One of the key open standards introduced by IMS Global to help gain greater data interoperability is OneRoster®, which significantly streamlines the rostering and enrollment process for school districts. Instead of submitting unique data and file formats to each vendor for rostering, OneRoster simplifies that process by defining a standard data set and two specific ways to exchange roster data—either through a CSV template or web services application programming interface (API).

The target date for the 2017-18 school year was August 1, which not only ensured students had access to their learning tools and resources on day one but also gave teachers valuable professional development time before the start of the school year.

"Teachers need access to resources digitally for the professional development that occurs in those first weeks," Stratton says. "ClassLink is the front-line tool for access. The value that ClassLink adds is a greater return on investment on all of your other products."



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