Canvas™ K-12 Case Study
Rockingham County School District

canvas k-12

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ROCKINGHAM COUNTY SCHOOLS

Institution Type
K-12 School District

Location
Reidsville, North Carolina

Interesting Facts
Google Apps for Education Charter District

Federated Identity Management pilot school

Population

Students in Grades K-12	13,900
High School Students	4,300
High School Teachers	325
Schools	26
High Schools	6

Implementing Instructure's Canvas LMS is a Breeze

Located in Reidsville, North Carolina, Rockingham County School District consists of 13,900 students in grades K-12. The district's technology department was in final preparations to roll out **a 1:1 laptop program**. Because introducing new technology to thousands of students and teachers is daunting, the 1:1 laptop program was broken into several phases. The program's first phase starts in January 2012 when laptops will be introduced to 47 classrooms across all of the district's six high schools.

Dennis Frye, the director of instructional technology and media for the school district, realized that giving laptops to high school students is great in theory. Frye told the technology department that in order for students to realize the full benefits of laptops in the classroom, **Rockingham needed a learning platform** that could serve as a digital space for teachers and students to organize their work and communicate.

"We were really excited to give laptops to the students, but with that comes a new set of challenges," Frye says. "In today's digital world, there's an abundance of information at everyone's fingertips; it can be really overwhelming for students. If you're not careful, new technology can quickly detract from the education process instead of enhancing it. **We needed a simple, open learning system to tie everything together.**"

Having been an adjunct professor at a local community college, Frye had worked with four different learning management systems: Blackboard, Angel, Moodle and Instructure's Canvas. Given his experience with these learning management systems, **Frye selected Canvas because of the system's intuitive nature, technological advantages and guaranteed uptime.**

"I've been in education for many years, and I know that for a technology to be successful it has to be intuitive,

"Rockingham held big expectations for Canvas, and I've been extremely pleased with its performance and the reaction of our teachers. Our implementation process has been a huge success; we're looking forward to a long future with Canvas."

— Dennis Frye, Dir. of Instructional Tech & Media
Rockingham County School District

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user-friendly and reliable. If there are a lot of problems with the technology, teachers will stop using it. Teachers don't have time to fight with an inadequate, cumbersome program."

Training Program

After the decision was made to use Canvas, Rockingham's technology support staff started training teachers in April 2011 through a series of two-day courses. Teachers were introduced to the solution's features, and they had the **opportunity to create mock classrooms** to experience the technology from the perspective of both the educator and the student.

"In the beginning, some of the teachers were skeptical," Frye says. "It's daunting to learn a new technology and figure out how to integrate it into lessons. After two short days of training, any concerns were put at ease. The **teachers quickly mastered the technology** and everyone was excited to implement Canvas in their classes. We've even had a few teachers delay their retirement just to work with Canvas in the classroom. **We couldn't have been more pleased with the response to Canvas**."

Teachers Re-Focused on Teaching

From communicating the class calendar to grading assignments, Rockingham's teachers are excited to improve productivity and focus on educating students. With Canvas, teachers can build their course online. A syllabus is created and the classroom calendar is populated automatically.

"Our teachers believe that **Canvas will play a key role in the success of our 1:1 laptop initiative** by creating a more organized, digital classroom," Frye says. "Teachers won't need to spend a lot of time tracking down assignments, documenting grades or reminding students about looming deadlines. With Canvas as part of our 1:1 mobile learning initiative, teachers can focus on teaching students."

IT Impressed with Performance

Rockingham's IT team has been impressed with the **high availability of Canvas** and the system's ability to update features and capabilities without a delay or downtime. And since Canvas is cloud-based, it requires very little maintenance from IT.

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reaction of our teachers. Our implementation process has been a huge success; we're looking forward to a long future with Canvas," Frye concludes.

Future Plans

As mentioned, Rockingham will introduce Canvas in the spring of 2012 to 47 classrooms spread across six high schools. The district plans to continue training teachers and expects Canvas to be implemented in all high school classrooms by January 2013.

About Instructure™

Instructure, Inc. is a technology company focused on improving education. Founded in 2008 by two Computer Science graduate students, Instructure built Canvas™ — the only commercial open-source learning management system and the only LMS native to the cloud. Instructure now services over 100 institutions in higher education and K-12. Investors include OpenView Ventures Partners, EPIC Ventures, and TomorrowVentures.

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