

K-2 teachers at Indian Valley Local Schools use Android tablets to build digital literacy



About Indian Valley Local Schools

- www.ivschools.org
- Tuscarawas County, Ohio
- 1,900 students

Goals

- Introduce devices that are intuitive for K-2 students

Approach

- Deployed 200 tablets and Google Play for Education

Results

- Reduced time and headaches setting up the devices
- Empowered teachers to be creative with their lesson plans
- Developed students' digital skills

About Indian Valley Local Schools

Located in Gnadenhutten in east central Ohio, Indian Valley Local Schools (IVLS) educates more than 1,900 elementary, middle, and high school students. More than 100 teachers focus on giving every student a personalized education and the resources that set him or her up for success.

Challenge

Since IVLS migrated to Google Apps in 2012, the district has emphasized using technology in classrooms. Schools began using netbooks, but teachers and students disliked the cramped keyboards and long load times. Schools purchased Chromebooks for their fuller keyboard, speed, and ease of use. IVLS now has 1,200 Chromebooks and is 1:1 in grades 4–12.

Teachers and students love using Chromebooks, but IVLS was challenged with finding the right technology to support early learning for elementary students. The Chromebooks' large keyboard can be challenging for young students who are still learning to type. When IVLS realized the need for tablets in classrooms to develop digital literacy skills from an early age and meet individualized needs of K-2 students, it knew it needed devices as cost-effective and easy to deploy and manage as Chromebooks.

Solution

In 2013, Brian Dittfeld, technology director for IVLS and authorized Google Education trainer, was drawn to the ease of management after seeing an early demo of Google Play for Education. In summer 2014, the district deployed 200 tablets, along with Google Play for Education, in K-2 classrooms. Each classroom received 10 tablets, including one for every teacher.

Since some students need a device with a keyboard and larger screen, whereas others excel with a smaller screen, IVLS bought different tablet models for varying purposes. Students who need a bigger form factor use the Samsung Galaxy Tab 4 Education or Asus Transformer Pad, while the majority of other students use the smaller Nexus 7 tablets.

Initially, the district chose the Android tablets due to their management capabilities, but now that they've been using the tablets this school year, the schools have experienced deeper student engagement and greater teacher creativity.

"It's great seeing how the Android tablets with Google Play for Education have changed our K-2 classrooms," Dittfeld says. "When I visit a classroom using the tablets, the students are highly engaged and always excited to be using them."

The web-based store designed for educational content lets teachers send practice content to students while they give one-on-one guidance to other students. IVLS teachers assign reading and math content most often. The most-loved content includes the [Intellijoy apps](#), the online library [Lit2Go](#), interactive ebooks on [Raz-Kids](#), and one-on-one reading lessons on [Reading Eggs](#).



Google for Education

- Google for Education provides open technologies to improve learning for everyone, anywhere. Solutions consist of affordable devices, innovative tools, and educational content designed for learning and built for the classroom.
- Google Classroom is a teacher-focused application that brings together all the parts of Google Apps—including Google Drive, Google Docs, and Google Presentations—and helps teachers keep class projects organized and communicate better with students.
- Google Apps is a free suite of communication and collaboration tools for schools including email, calendar, and documents accessible from any device, at any time.
- Chromebooks are fast, secure, portable computers that allow students to collaborate and share their work. Devices start at \$249 and are easy to set up and manage.
- Android tablets are affordable devices that are easy for schools to set up and manage, and designed for students to share.
- Google Play for Education is a content store built just for schools, so teachers can get the right apps and books to the right students, right away.

For more information visit:
www.google.com/edu



“When it comes to tablets, nothing compares to Android with Google Play for Education in the ease of deployment, management of the tablets, and teacher empowerment,” Dittfeld says.

Keys to Success

Easy deployment and device management

Setting up the Android tablets required minimal IT support. It took longer to take the tablets out of their boxes and tag them than to do the initial device setup, Dittfeld says. The IT team “bumped” fundamental content to the devices, and within an hour, the tablets were ready to use in the classrooms.

With other technologies, the IT team spent hours demoing the products, but the tablets were intuitive enough to require very little training. IVLS held a 45-minute training session after school to instruct teachers how to push content to the devices. “When teachers saw that pushing content to their students was as easy as sharing a Google Doc, they were pleasantly surprised,” Dittfeld says.

Increased student digital competency

Whether a teacher assigns students an app, educational game, or video, they are comfortable using many types of digital resources. Teachers encourage students to take ownership of their learning through interactive exercises.

For example, when Courtney Carlisle, a first grade teacher at Midvale Elementary School, was teaching about different ways animals communicate, she asked students to research with a partner how crickets, fireflies, and ants communicate on their tablets. Students developed their ability to research ideas on the Internet, navigate the tablet, and collaborate with peers.

“The tablets give my young learners valuable experience using technology they wouldn’t have access to without our classroom devices,” says Patty Coutts, a kindergarten teacher at Port Washington Elementary School.

“Three days a week, the students use the tablets for math tutorials and enrichment. While students are engaged with the tablets, I meet with guided reading and math groups.”

—Tiffany O’Connor, First Grade Teacher, Port Washington Elementary

Ease of provisioning apps

With Android tablets and Google Play for Education, teachers have the flexibility to choose appropriate apps and content for their students. “The Google Play for Education store was a major decision factor in choosing Android tablets,” Dittfeld says. “It’s not only been beneficial for the tablets, but for our Chromebooks as well. It empowers teachers to easily find specific content they need for their classrooms and assign it to the students without having to put in a help desk ticket.”

Teachers and students continue to explore new ways to use technology for more engaging and personalized learning. By using Google Apps and Chromebooks in combination with Android tablets and Google Play for Education, teachers are empowered to access learning resources that make a difference in their classrooms.

