



# Proven Practices Give New Life to EdTech

A Case Study on Deer Park Community City School District

## TRANSFORMATION

### How Proactive Planning Helped Change the Integration of Technology

The technology transformation within the Deer Park Community City Schools district has been astounding, being an invaluable benefit for students, teachers, and staff. Within 3-4 years of the district reaching out and partnering with Forward Edge for the technology needs, the district has achieved 1:1 chromebook ratio for students, reliable infrastructure and accompanying hardware that can handle the amount of users the district has daily. In addition, they have easy to understand budget and life-cycle replacement plan, and a broader range of technology that all users within the district have reliable, easy access to.

Forward Edge forecasts the life-cycles of the technology and equipment within the district, has an on-site technician to assist in the district's daily needs, and holds regular meetings between Forward Edge and the district to ensure technology is in alignment with educational standards and predicted district needs. These Managed Services Reviews (MSRs) not only help both parties stay on track with current initiatives and future goals, but also help the district plan more efficiently, avoiding unforeseen costs and creating a budget and life-cycle management process for all devices. This process has also created a long-lasting partnership between Deer Park Community City Schools and Forward Edge.

Forward Edge is a reliable partner for Deer Park Community City Schools, not just their vendor and installation experts. From advisement, to installation, to maintaining and management, Forward Edge works hand-in-hand with Deer Park Community City Schools, moving towards further success.

**"As a district, we have increased the capacity of what students and teachers can do beyond the wall of the school building," Dr. Stace Orso, Director of Curriculum at Deer Park Community City Schools stated, "so that learning doesn't have to stop when they leave us each day. We have also partnered with the instructional side of Forward Edge to provide embedded instructional coaching for teachers. This has better prepared our teachers for 21st century learning and has increased instructional and technological capacity amongst the staff.**



## BACKGROUND

### Discover the District Behind the Transformation

Deer Park Community City Schools is a district of around 1500 students, housed within three buildings, in a small suburb of Cincinnati. The district is full of pride and promise, though it has had its challenges moving the district forward in terms of utilizing technology. Realizing that drastic improvements needed to be made, the district reached out to Forward Edge to do a technology audit to better formulate a plan and gauge what changes most needed to be made.

Ultimately, Forward Edge provided a plan, met with the technology committee and school board and eventually secured the contract in 2014. Deer Park Community City Schools then moved to make additional upgrades to their district including installing reliable infrastructure, replacing aged out hardware including digital learning tools, laptops, desktops, wireless, switches, and other devices, along with implementing 1:1 device strategies. **A large focus of these actions were set on improving the overall quality and availability of technology to the students, staff, and teachers throughout the school district, propelling Deer Park Community City Schools forward in the 21st century learning environment.**



## PROCESS

### A Holistic Approach to Improving Infrastructure and Devices

Deer Park took the needed steps to devise and implement a multi-stage replacement plan in conjunction with Forward Edge that not only fit within their budget, but also allowed them the freedom to prioritize as needed.

In order to accomplish these technology goals and long-term replacement plan, more than just one-touch service and device management was needed. By implementing Partnered Managed Services, Forward Edge could constantly manage and monitor the district's network. This coupled with adding an on-site technician provided ample support for the district.

Forward Edge's Partner Managed Services offering was able to give Deer Park the peace of mind to know they will have an always running and secure learning environment and reduction in lost learning time. **The constant monitoring and alerting of network devices, remote and on-site remediation, and wireless maintenance and troubleshooting provides Deer Park with the confidence that a proactive, well-maintained systems maintenance process is in place.** This robust offering was, and still remains, an integral part of the continued success at Deer Park Community City Schools because it allowed greater access to important technology-based teaching tools and applications, and provided reliable, on-demand service, anytime.



**Christopher Infante, Director of Engineering at Forward Edge said of the whole process, "Although it was originally identified as a one-time technology audit, as a part of our Partner Managed Services offering, it is a constantly evolving plan to make sure the district is aligned to current and industry best practices."**

## KEY ACTIONS

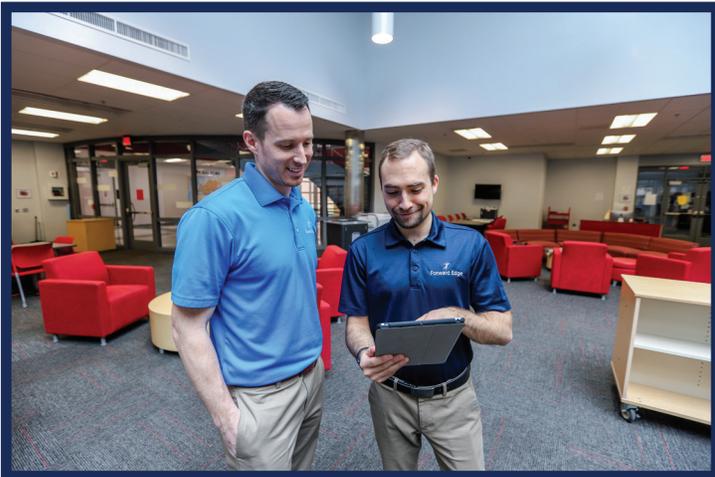
### Assessment Drives Actionable Go-Forward Steps

One of the major issues Deer Park was faced with was infrastructure, which was no longer sufficiently providing reliable access for all users, including the Superintendent who was unable to reliably connect and use the building Wifi in his office. More issues faced by the district were that devices were not up to date; obsolete hardware was still being used, parts were being kept that no longer had use and only took up space, and many devices had never been imaged, updated or maintained.

When Forward Edge finished conducting their Technology Audit, it was discovered that many students did not have access to devices in a 1:1 manner, instead having a ratio of approximately 50 students for every 1 device. The devices the students did have access to were android tablets that did not have the proper, most current learning software available and were not in line with the educational technology standards of the time. Furthermore, the previous vendor had left Deer Park with insufficient technology life-cycle planning, non-succinct or non-matching technology, and had used unbranded hardware, meaning the quality of the hardware could not be assured and there was no manufacturer support to help with break/fix issues.

This also meant determining viability and age of technology within the district was a challenge. With no knowledge or history of warranty and support contracts, any devices needing repairs or upgrades had to have extra time spent determining whether it would be feasible or prudent for the district to keep in circulation.

Technology had previously been handled in a patchwork or reactionary way; Phone systems, wireless devices, and other important pieces of educational technology had only been inspected after issues occurred or only replaced when broken, leading to many neglected aspects because no forward-thinking planning or maintenance schedule had been put in place. Ultimately, this meant that students, teachers, and staff were not getting the most out of their technology resources. **The above issues presented many interesting challenges for the district and Forward Edge, but all were overcome with meaningful collaboration, insightful planning and industry best practices.**



## SOLUTIONS

### Implementing Technology into Every Day Practice Provides Growth

The solution steps Forward Edge brought to manage these challenges were methodical and detailed, setting the stage for continued success. There was a step-by-step 30 month replacement plan for devices and equipment that allowed the customer to fully replace aging and outdated technology, which started with inventorying all devices and equipment in the district.

## SOLUTIONS, CONTINUED.

Then, we replaced existing wireless access points, increasing device density over the next few years, mostly in-part to E-Rate, which accelerated this process. In support of this wireless network, switches and servers were also upgraded.

**“By leveraging industry leading manufacturers and industry best practices, Forward Edge was able to align Deer Park’s goals and needs in a way that would benefit them now and well into the future,”** said Forward Edge CIO, William Cirone of the improvements they deemed necessary to make at Deer Park Community City School District.

After these crucial steps, various computer labs and equipment were marked obsolete, either being replaced or taken out of circulation completely. Then a long term action plan was put in place to provide active solution steps for Deer Park Community City Schools in the future.

Of these steps, there were a few stand out measures that set the tone and changed the game for both Deer Park Community City Schools and Forward Edge. First and foremost, Forward Edge worked with the customer to compile a priority list that allowed the customer to see what needs should be tended to first, which facilitated the rest of the process to get smoothly and without distraction.

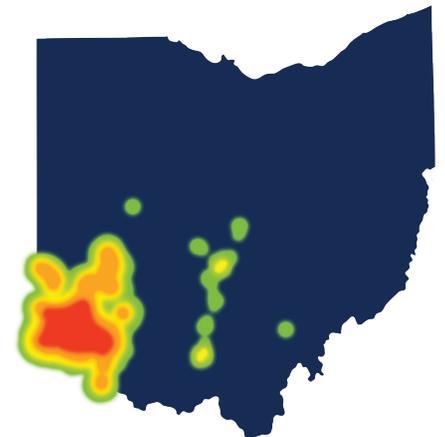
Secondly, the thorough device assessment allowed Forward Edge to advise which technology aspects to replace, remove, or upgrade. This eventually lead to a 1 to 1 student chromebook structure for the district. Lastly, these action items were bolstered by having an onsite technician for the district and invested services for hardware, server management, and other technology aspects to create a full support package for Deer Park. In doing these game-changing action items, Forward Edge was able to play a crucial part in furthering the district’s technological development.

## MORE ABOUT FORWARD EDGE

**Forward Edge focuses 100% on Education, making our partner district’s needs our #1 priority.**

As a niche provider focused on the Education market, we bring deep specialized expertise to each school we service. We understand every aspect of school technology and relentlessly evaluate ways to future-proof school needs.

Our services include but are not limited to Partner Managed Services, Wireless Infrastructure Management and Networking, Cabling, Staff Augmentation and Curriculum and Technology Integration.



**CONTACT US TO LEARN HOW WE CAN IMPACT YOUR DISTRICT!  
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