San Francisco Unified School District Department of Technology Develops Plan for Safe and Successful Device Deployment in a COVID World

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The Story

Like many school districts across the United States, the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) is starting the 2020-21 school year remotely. The Department of Technology (DoT) for the SFUSD has made it their mission to prepare nearly 5,000 educators (over 400 of whom are new to the district) in all aspects of a digital classroom–from both a hardware and software perspective. Every minute leading up to the school year was critical to their readiness, as students' education continues to hang in the balance.

Challenges

Safety Concerns

In preparing for the new remote school year, the health and safety of SFUSD's teachers and the DoT staff were a top priority. At the outset, every time a teacher needed a new device or to exchange an old one, they would stop by the Help Desk Office in-person and interact with an on premises team member. Although they did everything they could to avoid in-person contact, the sheer volume of traffic was putting everyone involved at increased risk.

Staffing Concerns

Each time this type of device support was needed, a team member had to be physically onsite. Triaging the issue would gobble up a minimum of 15 minutes from the Help Desk's schedule–not to mention the growing wait time for a tech person to become available. Whether a teacher is new to the district or a current teacher's device needs repair, it's imperative that teachers can access a working device as quickly as possible.

Teacher Training Needs

In order for teachers to prepare for a new way of digital teaching, they needed more time and increased Help Desk support to learn new software and be trained on best practices for remote teaching. Constant interruptions due to device deployment and hardware issues took valuable time away from the DoT team's ability prepare teachers for their new digital classroom.

Preparing for Success

In order to streamline these challenges, SFUSD strategically placed four LocknCharge FUYL Tower Smart Lockers at the district's centrally-located main office where it could be accessed beyond normal office hours and even on weekends. Each bay is equipped with one ready-to-go device, which simplified the process of distributing and maintaining devices to 3 easy steps without the need for any face-to-face interaction or Help Desk interruption.

3 Easy Steps for Device Distribution

1 A teacher in need of a device notifies the Help Desk through its ticketing system.

2 Within 1 business day, a FUYL Tower bay is assigned to the teacher.

3 The teacher retrieves the device with their 6-digit PIN and is ready to go.

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The Outcomes

- ✔ 1,200 devices are being deployed via FUYL Towers to NEW teachers joining the district and returning para educators.

- ✔ Zero physical human contact for distribution services ensures the safety of DoT staff and educators.

- ✔ There is no difficult scheduling for device pickups or dropoffs, and hours of access are greatly increased.

- ✔ Device deployment was shortened from as many as five days to as few as one day.

- ✔ With LocknCharge Cloud, the Help Desk can track who retrieved a device from a Tower and when.

- ✔ The Help Desk recovered valuable time needed to focus on teacher training.

An Uncertain Future

It's impossible to know what the future of education will look like one month from now or even one year from now. Should schools switch to a hybrid model or an in-person model, the FUYL Tower is flexible enough to remain an extremely useful tool in any scenario:

- ✔ LocknCharge Cloud offers a streamlined way to expand the program to include student devices.

- ✔ Devices can continue to be deployed with zero contact to new teachers or students extremely quickly.

- ✔ Towers can be used as a repair pick-up/drop-off point to keep device downtime to a minimum.

- ✔ Towers can easily be switched to "Public Mode" to be used as public charging stations throughout the school. This is especially helpful for 1:1 take-home device programs because students who forget to charge their device at home will be able to securely charge their device at school.

- ✔ Towers can be placed in areas such as Family Resources Centers or other indoor spaces to allow the community easier access to devices as needed.

- ✔ Students with housing insecurity are offered a place to safely charge and store their devices overnight.

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