



21st Century Schools Initiative (21S) at a Glance

Overview

Cisco launched the 21st Century Schools Initiative (21S) in September 2005 to support post-hurricane rebuilding efforts in the U.S. Gulf Coast while creating a sustainable, scalable, and replicable model for education reform. 21S is supported by a multimillion dollar investment in technology, training programs, and Cisco® Leadership Fellows' expertise.

The aim of 21S is to transform education systems to meet the needs of 21st century learners, educators, and organizations by promoting leadership development, building capacity for collaboration, and using technology as an accelerant of change. The emphasis is on scalability, replication, and sustainability.

Why Cisco

As a global employer with a presence in more than 160 countries, Cisco has a vested interest in equipping the workforce of the future with 21st century skills. 21S allows Cisco to leverage extensive experience gained through initiatives such as the Cisco Networking Academy® program and multistakeholder partnerships such as the Jordan Education Initiative, Rajasthan Education Initiative, and Egyptian Education Initiative to help bring about global education reform.

Background

21S was initially launched in eight school districts in Mississippi and Louisiana. Fifty-four schools participated in the pilot program, along with several education partners such as Harvard University, Lesley University, and the Schlechty Center for Leadership in School Reform; corporate partners such as IBM, AT&T, Promethean, and Pearson; and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as Digital Opportunity Trust and One Economy. An ecosystem of partners is a key component of the 21S framework.

Research and thought leadership around the world has shown that system change requires an interplay of several key elements. Based on this understanding, the four guiding principles of 21S are as follows:

- 21st century curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment
- High-quality infrastructure and technology
- Policies, procedures, governance, and partners
- Leadership, people, and culture

Impact

- More than 3500 teachers have participated in professional development training on leading education practices and the effective use of technology in the classroom. An additional 5000 teachers from the Jefferson Parish Public School System (JPPSS) will participate in a two-day Technology Integration Institute in August 2009.
- A fully converged voice, video, and data technology infrastructure has been deployed in all 21S schools and classrooms.
- More than 60,000 students initially benefited from 21S. As the districts expanded, that number has grown to more than 100,000 students.

- Engaging technologies have been incorporated into many classrooms, including interactive whiteboards, student response systems, speakers, mobile laptop carts, projectors, enhanced acoustics, video conferencing, FLIP video cameras, iPods, GPS, and IP telephony.
- Engaging web 2.0 activities such as podcasting, Skype, blogging, and wikis have been incorporated into the curricula at participating schools.
- Participating districts have reported improvements in student engagement and teacher enthusiasm, as well as positive “leading indicators” such as a rise in graduation rates, AP enrollment, and test scores; and a decline in dropout rates.
- With support from Cisco, Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) has placed more than 100 interns in 21S schools to inspire students and help teachers integrate technology into their lessons. DOT USA was awarded a \$3 million grant from the Mississippi Department of Employment Security to place interns in 121 Mississippi schools located in counties that are recovering from the hurricane during the 2009-2010 school year.
- One Economy worked with Cisco to provide affordable computers for families within 21S districts.
- In March 2008, Cisco partnered with NBA Cares to build and equip 30 community resource centers in the Recovery School District in Louisiana. Cisco provided funding and IP telephony products to help these centers achieve their goals of increasing parental involvement in schools and improving student performance.
- The Jefferson Parish Economic Development Committee has commended the district on its state-of-the-art technology implementation, internal accountability, and improved curricula, and has indicated its support with several grants and funding initiatives.
- Jefferson Parish has extended the 21S framework to 90 buildings in the district. The remaining 18 schools will be completed by August 2009. Each school will be equipped with high speed connectivity, technology enabled classrooms and an instructional design team to manage ongoing transformation.
- In 2008, the Jefferson Parish Public School System reported a five percent year-over-year improvement on Louisiana Education Assessment Program (LEAP) standardized tests. In 2009, the JPPSS scores improved in 25 of the 30 areas tested on the i-LEAP, LEAP, and GEE in grades 3 through 11.
- Smithsonian American Art Museum, NASA, and the Discovery Channel partnered with Cisco and the 21S schools to bring professional development resources and experts into the classrooms to help more than 1400 teachers develop web 2.0 skills.
- In June 2008, 30 educators from 21S schools in Mississippi and Louisiana attended the first Cisco-Smithsonian American Art Museum Teacher Institute. During the weeklong program, interdisciplinary teams learned how to use technology to integrate visual arts into their curricula. In 2009, the Cisco-Smithsonian American Art Museum Teacher Institute will be brought locally to Louisiana for an intensive 4-day workshop for teachers from ten Jefferson Parish middle schools.
- Sustainability reports have been created to help districts align technology with their goals to get the highest return from their IT investments.
- The Education Development Center, Center for Children and Technology (EDC CCT) is currently conducting a full program evaluation to be released in October 2009. To learn more, visit <http://cct.edc.org>.

For More Information

www.transformglobaleducation.org - www.21cschools.org