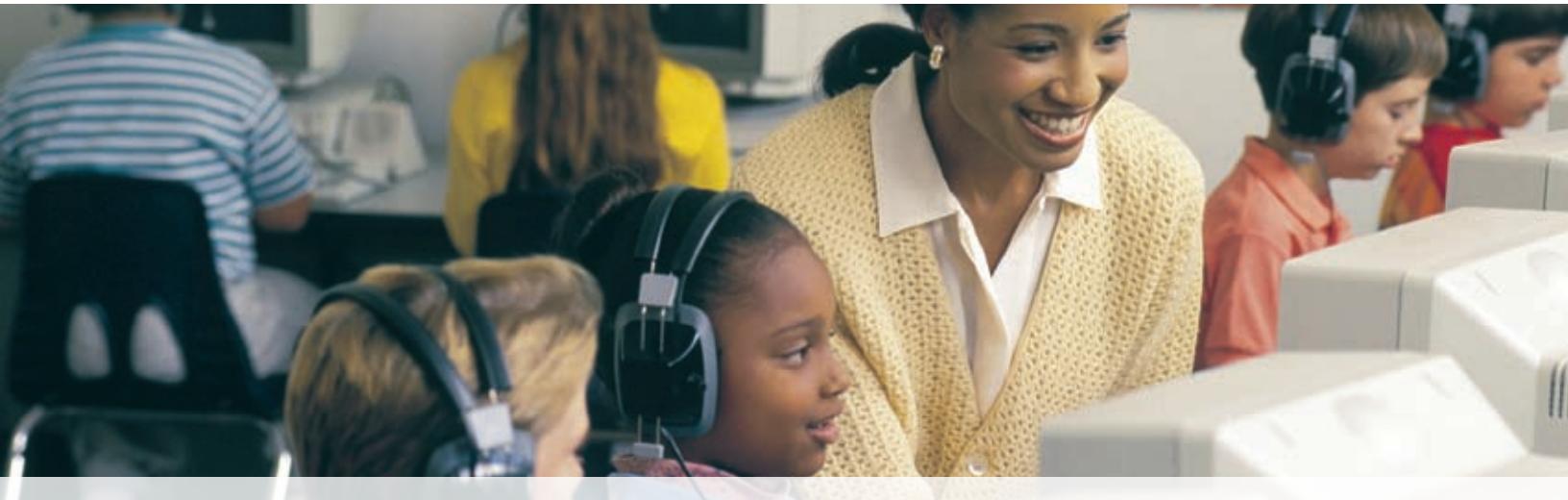# CISCO™

Cisco's Global Education group is actively engaged in the work of transforming education systems to meet the needs of 21st century learners, educators, and organizations. This transformation will require a shift in the way teachers teach, leaders lead, and students learn.

Case Study

Best Practices Transform Jefferson Parish Schools in Record Time

In 2005, in her third year as superintendent of the Jefferson Parish Public School System (JPPSS), Dr. Diane Roussel started developing a vision for transforming the greater New Orleans area district into a 21st century school system. Her goal was to improve student outcomes by providing engaging and challenging work for all students and remediation for every child who needed it, backed by a reliable and powerful network that would provide access to technology in every classroom.

During Hurricane Katrina many schools on both sides of the Mississippi River were severely affected by flooding and high winds. Despite the damage, the district reopened 80 of its 87 schools in October 2005, through a heroic effort that came to the attention of the Cisco® 21st Century Schools Initiative (21S).

Jefferson Parish Public School System

LOCATION:
Greater New Orleans area

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS:
87

NUMBER OF STUDENTS:
±44,000

GRADES:
Pre-K through 12

SCHOOL STRUCTURE:
Suburban

PERCENT OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH:
75

21S is designed to help school districts rapidly transform learning and improve student outcomes through the strategic use of technology. The 21S team invited JPPSS to join the initiative, in part because of the district's strong leadership, resilience, and focus on constant improvement. The district's technology goals were ambitious—upgrade the network infrastructure and physical facilities; equip all 3000 classrooms with ceiling-mounted projectors, teacher laptops, and audio speakers; install interactive whiteboards in 40 percent of the classrooms; and integrate technology into all administrative, teaching, learning, and professional development functions.

21S funded the various technologies in 16 pilot schools, and the district is expanding the effort into the remaining schools. In addition, Cisco donated time, equipment, and expertise in the form of 21S Fellows, which are Cisco employees who relocated to the Gulf Coast region to help schools develop scalable, replicable, and sustainable programs.

Within a year, district leaders and the 21S Fellows implemented the new technologies in the 16 schools. To be successful with the remaining schools, however, district leaders knew they needed more support. "We were focused on accelerating the shift in our education model so that we could improve student outcomes as quickly as possible," says Roussel. "We were moving very fast, and we knew we needed more proactive planning and help."

The local 21S team recommended hiring a highly experienced chief technology officer (CTO) who could support the strategic goals of the district and maintain the desired rate of progress. District leaders, with guidance from the 21S team, selected Dr. Mable Moore to fill the position.

Moore met with the superintendent and administrative cabinet within her first few days on the job. "I wanted to have a very clear sense of the goals and objectives of the district so that I could align the technology vision with them," explains Moore. This was the first set of best practices implemented by Moore and Roussel to help guarantee a successful transition to new forms of teaching and learning at JPPSS.

Creating a Roadmap for Success

The second best practice was identifying available resources and developing a roadmap for success. Moore and her team met with district leaders—including the assistant superintendent, the chief financial officer, the director of instructional technology, and the network manager—to determine the state of technology in the district.

The district and the 21S team developed a two-year plan that outlined detailed steps and costs for education transformation. "The roadmap had to ensure that every school would be on the same playing field, and that every teacher would have the same resources and the same level of professional development," says Moore.

The roadmap was completed one month after Moore's first meeting with the superintendent. It contained four main proposals—to expand the technology staff; make all networking, telecommunications, curriculum development and instruction, help desk management, and instructional design teams cross-functional; assign responsibility for all technology decisions to one technology leader; and establish a policy whereby technology purchases would be standardized and approved by the CTO.

Securing Buy-In

Drs. Roussel and Moore understood the importance of securing input and support from all stakeholders on topics such as classroom technologies and professional development strategies. At a superintendent's conference attended by district leaders, Moore shared the details of the roadmap and discussed plans to bring the remaining 71 district schools on board in groups of eight over the next two years.

The inclusion of all schools was essential to secure leadership support. "They saw that we could describe exactly what was going to happen and when for each school," notes Moore. As a result, support for the plan grew quickly throughout the district.

Evaluating Staffing Needs

A third best practice involved evaluating technology departments, rewriting job descriptions as needed, and adding new positions. Although the district had increased the technology staff to a total of 20, most staff members had instructional backgrounds rather than training and certification in technology. In addition, some staff members reported to instructional managers, while others reported to technology managers.

The roadmap called for 28 new positions, including two new directors, a professional development coordinator, a grant writer, and a 21S program manager. Department-level management and senior network positions were also created within the different cross-functional teams.

To justify the new hires, Moore detailed not only the salaries and the overall costs, but the education impact as well. The additional positions were approved quickly, with the superintendent and chief financial officer recommending a phased-in hiring program to minimize the financial impact. Current staff members were encouraged to apply for the new positions, and all were rehired, although not necessarily in their previous roles.

Standardizing Technologies

Before 21S, JPPSS schools functioned as independent agents with autonomous budgets. Principals purchased whatever they deemed necessary from a variety of vendors. The district standardized their technology-acquisition processes and established a policy to prohibit purchases that did not align with district objectives. In addition, a new policy required CTO-authorization for every technology-related purchase. This allowed the district to reduce the number of vendors, take advantage of state contracts, obtain better pricing, and save money over the long term.

Building on Scalability, Replicability, and Sustainability

In 18 months, JPPSS implemented its new technology solution in 16 schools, developed plans to replicate it within another eight schools, and provided professional development to help ensure sustainable and effective technology integration. This model will allow the district to expand the program into the remaining 71 schools within the next 18 months.

This pace of transformation is unusually fast for a large public school system. Without the best practices developed by the leadership team, the pace of adoption would probably have been much slower, with many more glitches along the way. JPPSS is now poised to become a 21st century school district in record time. In addition, the district has built a solid business case for obtaining school board approval for future projects. "This is a model we can duplicate," says Roussel. "And with the right model, our schools will have better student outcomes and connect more successfully to the community."

For more information about Cisco Global Education, please visit our website at **http://www.tranformglobaleducation.org**.
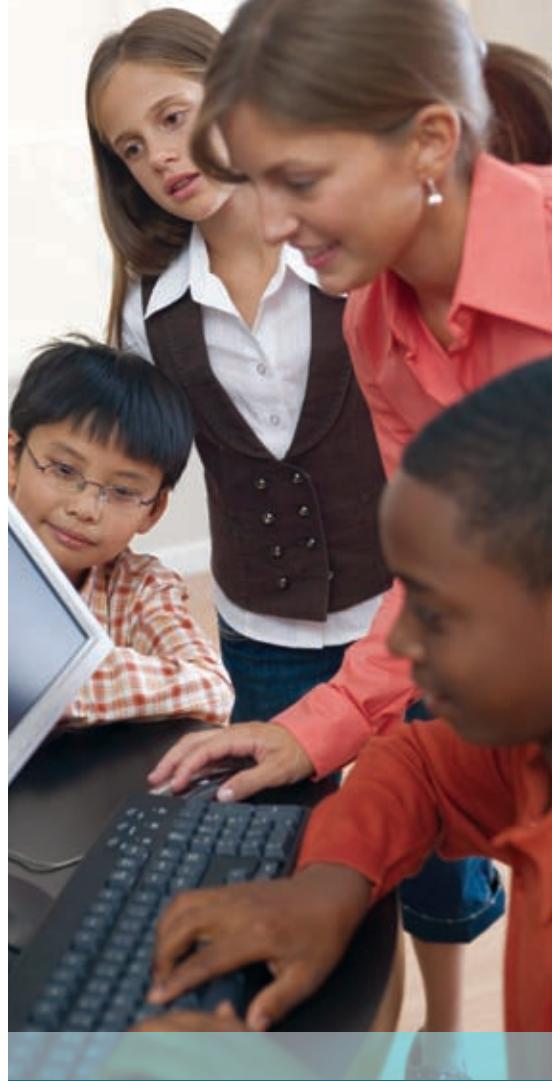
"This is a model we can duplicate. And with the right model, our schools will have better student outcomes and connect more successfully to the community."

Dr. Diane Roussel
Superintendent, Jefferson Parish Public School System

Cisco Recommended Ecosystem Partners for Integrating Technology into 21st Century Teaching and Learning

Information on Integrating Technology

- **Metiri Group**
(www.metiri.com)
Education consultant that provides a broad range of services that empower educators to advance effective teaching and learning, use technology in powerful and meaningful ways, and foster 21st century skills.

- **November Learning**
(www.novemberlearning.com)
An organization that promotes the effective use of information and communication technologies to support and enhance learning for children and communities

- **Partnership for 21st Century Skills**
(www.21stcenturyskills.org)
An advocacy organization that is focused on infusing 21st century skills into education; Cisco is a founding member

- **WIDE World – Harvard Graduate School of Education**
(http://wideworld.pz.harvard.edu)
Offers online learning programs for professional development and using technology in classrooms

Online Content and Tools

- **Discovery Education Streaming**
(http://streaming.discoveryeducation.com)
A digital video-on-demand and online teaching service to help improve students' retention and test scores

- **ePals Global Community**
(www.epals.com)
A community of collaborative classrooms engaged in cross-cultural exchanges, project sharing, and language learning

- **History Channel**
(www.history.com)
Television station that offers free programming related to history and culture

- **Jing Project**
(www.jingproject.com)
An online resource that offers free software that allows teachers and students to capture and share videos and other content

- **NASA Education Program**
(education.nasa.gov)
Program that provides activities and information related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

- **National Geographic**
(www.nationalgeographic.com/education/)
Online resource for lesson plans, activities, and information related to geography, history, culture, animals, and other topics

- **Ning**
(www.ning.com)
An online platform that allows individuals and groups to create their own collaborative networks

- **Promethean Planet**
(www.prometheanplanet.com)
An online resource that includes lessons and professional development materials related to interactive whiteboards

- **Smithsonian American Art Museum**
(http://americanart.si.edu/index3.cfm)
Provider of education resources such as state standards-based, multidisciplinary lesson plans that span the fields of art, design, science, technology, history, culture, and language arts