



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



Leadership Builds Momentum for Change in Louisiana School District—Test Scores Improve Steadily Across All Grade Levels

The 21S Unified Vision

To help students flourish in the 21st century global economy, the Cisco® 21st Century Schools Initiative (21S) promotes creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving, and information literacy, as well as life skills such as leadership, adaptability, self-direction, and responsibility.

To support educators in this effort, 21S provides continuous, job-embedded professional learning at all levels, with a focus on managing change, engaging students, supporting authentic learning, reviewing cost-effectiveness, and implementing new instructional technologies.

Jefferson Parish Public School System

LOCATION:

Greater New Orleans area

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS:

87

NUMBER OF STUDENTS:

±44,000

KATRINA AFTERMATH:

4 schools destroyed and 70 damaged on 8/29/05; thousands of students, principals, and teachers scattered across U.S.

RE-OPENED FOR BUSINESS:

10/3/2005

The 21S Holistic Approach to Education Reform

After Hurricane Katrina struck in August 2005, Cisco unveiled an initiative, known as the 21st Century Schools Initiative (21S), to help rebuild the devastated Gulf Coast schools and communities. In addition to equipping each school with instructional technologies and advanced networking equipment, the focus of 21S is to develop a blueprint for 21st century education based on a holistic approach to education reform, supported by Cisco's business experience in management and system change.

21S is a multiphase initiative that aims to create a sustainable, scalable, and replicable model of education reform that will extend beyond Mississippi and Louisiana. The 21S model incorporates transformative technology, tools, and training; backed by the expertise of a dedicated technology and business partner. Support for every implementation is provided by an onsite Cisco Fellow.

21S selects the best technologies to help schools achieve education transformation. Cisco Fellows provide support and expertise, benchmarks are established, student performance is monitored, and educational goals are aligned with community goals for economic development.

Leading the Vision

In the fall of 2006, Cisco and the Jefferson Parish Public School System (JPPSS) began to implement 21S in a core group of JPPSS schools. Participating schools were selected in collaboration with the Louisiana Department of Education. In 2007, district funds and Cisco grants enabled JPPSS to expand the program to a second group of schools. JPPSS plans to replicate the 21S model in all 87 schools by 2010.

The driving force in building this momentum has been the outstanding leadership of JPPSS Superintendent Diane Roussel. "Our international competitors understand the key role that their education systems play in producing workers prepared for a globally competitive 21st century economy," says Dr. Roussel. "We need to act on this understanding too. Not doing so will short-change our students."

A 21S vision shared by the superintendent, principals, teachers, and Cisco helps direct the progress of this initiative. "We are aiming at something larger; not just educational change, but educational transformation," says Michael Stevenson, "designed to give districts the components they need to move along the path toward 21st century pedagogy, training, skills, technology, and leadership."

Improving Test Scores

Louisiana Education Assessment Program (LEAP) scores have improved across the JPPSS district. According to Dr. Roussel, "The recent improvements in LEAP scores indicate that our current initiatives are working."

In 2008, the percentage of JPPSS students scoring at or above the basic, mastery, and advanced levels in language arts and math improved at almost every organizational level. The percentage of students with unsatisfactory scores on the eighth grade LEAP declined in every subject, and the 21S schools' results on state tests beat the district average for students performing at or above the basic level (excluding selective-enrollment and alternative schools).

The district attributes this improved performance to several factors that helped accelerate student progress, including the leadership of the superintendent, ongoing support from Cisco and partners such as Schlechty Center for Leadership in School Reform and Digital Opportunity Trust, and the integration of new technologies such as interactive whiteboards, teacher laptops, printers and scanners, classroom audio speakers, digital media equipment, and handheld PDAs. In addition, online assessment tools facilitated faster intervention, small group instruction, and individualized instruction.

Another major change factor is the 21S professional development program, which is guided by a steering committee composed of senior administrators and a Cisco Fellow and focused on strategies for increasing skill levels through the use of technology. A designated teacher at each school is responsible for collecting and disseminating best practices in teaching and technology integration strategies.

"We see JPPSS moving toward the vision of an engaged classroom," says Cisco Director Peg Maddock. "And as the district moves along this path, we are starting to see a holistic transformation."



Next Generation Networks Play Pivotal Role

With the support of Cisco, core infrastructure upgrades have dramatically improved network response times and reliability at 21S schools.

Teacher laptops and interactive whiteboards are being installed in phases, so that teachers can leverage a variety of applications to engage students, collaborate with parents, and exchange ideas with their colleagues. Cisco advanced technologies such as voice, video, and mobility are also supporting the development of a 21st century learning environment.

Impacting the Local Economy

“A major component of the 21S vision is the impact of education on the local community,” says Mary de Wysocki, 21S director and Cisco Fellow, “since quality education supports a sustainable economy.” The Jefferson Parish Economic Development Committee (JEDCO) agrees. According to JEDCO Executive Director Lucien Gunter, “The overall appeal of Jefferson to businesses and residents alike is dependent upon a strong public education system.”

A recent JEDCO report commends the district’s progress to date. “Over the past five years, state of the art technology has been implemented, internal accountability has been strengthened, and curricula have been diversified and improved” (Jefferson EDGE 2020 Strategic Implementation Plan: Public Education, 2008). JEDCO has indicated its support with several grants and funding initiatives.

Looking to the Future

According to the JEDCO report, “The challenge before the community now is to build upon these actions by making certain investment and policy choices in order to elevate the Parish’s public schools to the level of quality that the community deserves” (Jefferson EDGE 2020 Strategic Implementation Plan: Public Education, 2008).

Superintendent Roussel supports this view. “JEDCO’s recommendations build upon our successes and unite stakeholders behind a concise policy agenda to make Jefferson Parish a true model for quality public education in Louisiana,” says Dr. Roussel.

To build on these successes, JPPSS continues to expand its capabilities. In 2009, for example, JPPSS will initiate a new program of ongoing progress monitoring. The 21S model will continue to evolve, led by the superintendent and supported by teachers, members of the community, and Cisco.

For more information about Cisco Global Education, please visit our website at <http://www.transformglobaleducation.org>.



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Mary de Wysocki
21S Director and Cisco Fellow

Cisco Recommended Ecosystem Partners for System Transformation

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



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