# How Waterbury Public Schools quickly scaled their 1:1 program using Lenovo + LanSchool's bundle offer

Lenovo

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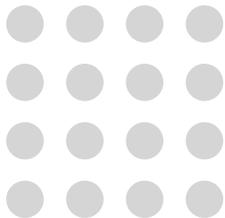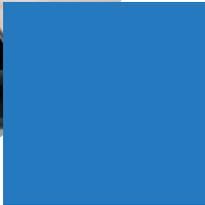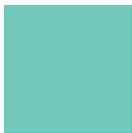
It is well documented that K-12 school district budgets are tight, and it has become even more difficult in recent years to keep up with the costs for all the emerging technologies and tools needed to support successful 1:1 learning programs.

That is one reason why Lenovo and LanSchool offer a hardware and software bundle solution, giving schools and districts a free year of LanSchool's classroom management software for every qualifying Lenovo device they purchase. This bundle not only maximizes school budgets, but it also makes IT teams' jobs easier by simplifying the rollout process, streamlining device management, and keeping students and networks safer – all while providing industry leading devices and software to schools. For cash-strapped school districts like Waterbury Public Schools in Waterbury, Connecticut, the Lenovo + LanSchool bundle offer has proven to be a game changer.

The situation: Waterbury Public Schools' funding limitations

Like many school districts, Waterbury Public Schools did not have the funding in place to meet the distance and hybrid learning equipment demands brought on by district-wide school closures in the spring of 2020. Not only did the district not have 1:1 devices for its 19,000 students, but several of its 30 schools had a very limited number of computers to go around, as few as two per building in some cases.

To help meet these growing needs on their limited budget, Waterbury allocated funding toward the purchase of Lenovo Chromebooks. The district knew that not only would Chromebooks be easy to manage, but every Lenovo Chromebook they bought gave them access to a free, one-year LanSchool Air license. As they secured funding to roll out more devices throughout the year, they continued to choose Lenovo devices, taking full advantage of the bundle offering.

The rollout: Waterbury scales up their 1:1 program

When school closures began, Waterbury's IT team had to be creative in their approach to equipping students and teachers with devices, redistributing the few laptops they had to cover as many high school students as possible before moving forward with new device purchases for junior high and elementary students.

As more of the district got up and running with 1:1 devices, teachers began to express a need for software that would help them keep students engaged and give them more control over how students were using devices during class hours. IT knew Lenovo's LanSchool Air bundle offered a great solution, as the district already had access to a free year of the software for each of its existing Lenovo devices.

"We began to roll it out to a pilot group, and the launch was pretty straightforward because I didn't hear any questions about it from teachers," Nick Chapman, Senior Network Specialist, said. "Immediately, interest grew and other schools who weren't in the pilot program started saying right away they could see the value in LanSchool, and they asked if we could get more licenses." As Waterbury continued to buy devices, they made use of almost 10,000 free LanSchool Air licenses across 14 schools.

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The benefits: Waterbury finds success with Lenovo and LanSchool

There were several reasons the Lenovo + LanSchool bundle was so instrumental in helping Waterbury's IT team deliver a 1:1 program and support distance learning:

Making device management easier with industry-leading Lenovo devices

One of the primary reasons Waterbury chose to invest in Lenovo Chromebooks was the ease of management. Chromebooks enable IT teams to set and enforce 100+ policies and settings by user or group, including Wi-Fi and proxy settings, installation of apps and extensions, limiting access to authorized users, and more.

"Chromebooks are managed through the Google Admin console, which makes rolling out any software phenomenally easy. I can roll out software that changes all of the Chromebooks on our home network, make a change, and then verify within 12 hours how many devices were impacted," Nick said.

It's this ease of management that made LanSchool Air simple to roll out as teachers requested access to it. Additionally, classes can be quickly imported into LanSchool Air through Google Classroom. Chromebooks are also easier to manage in the sense that they limit the types of programs students can install, making it simpler to avoid viruses and keep students on track during class time. Another major benefit of Lenovo Chromebooks is that they're cost-effective compared to other laptops, providing a great value for budget-conscious districts, while also delivering great features like long battery life and, with some models, a touchscreen.

Maximizing strict budgets while proving LanSchool's ROI

All in, Nick estimates the bundle offer saved Waterbury Public Schools around $20,000 in classroom management software licensing over the last year.

"Having the available licenses allowed so many more people to experience LanSchool. Without the free licenses, teachers would have probably started hearing about classroom management software from other districts and asking why they didn't have it," Nick said. "It's hard for us to get funding for software without first knowing the merits."

That's why having the ability to try out the software free for a year made it easier to get buy-in from the board of education to purchase 4,000 additional licenses to cover some of the district's non-Lenovo devices. "And after the success teachers have found with the software, when the free licenses expire, I bet the district is going to allocate budget to purchase licenses going forward," Nick said. "Now that everyone is used to having it, they won't want to be without it."

Helping students stay engaged and on track

For Nick, teacher satisfaction is one of the biggest benefits of using Lenovo Chromebooks and LanSchool Air. "LanSchool reduces the number of complaints from teachers asking for a solution we didn't previously have," he said. "Now when a teacher asks what we can do about students removing themselves from Google Classroom, for example, we can say, 'As long as you're monitoring with LanSchool, you can see them while the class is active.'"
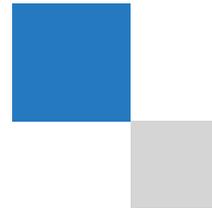
Sixth-grade English Language Arts teacher Mallory Brito has used LanSchool in her classroom for several years to keep students on track without having to take valuable teaching time to redirect distracted students. "A lot of our students have figured out that if they use Dualless and have a split screen, I'll only see one of their screens but not the other. Being able to close out their background tabs really helps," she said.

Today, she primarily uses the Messaging feature to work one-to-one with students, as well as the Screen Sharing feature to see what students are working on and how they're progressing in their assignments. She is also a fan of the Blank Screen feature, which enables teachers to share a static image or other custom screen to redirect student attention to an offline activity. And Screen Capture helps her take a screenshot of a student's work or activity so she can share it with parents as needed.

Seventh grade English Language Arts teacher Lucille Rivera said that, when she and her colleagues introduced LanSchool Air, her students were worried they would experience a loss of privacy, but her positive approach to incorporating the software has yielded great results with her students. "Engagement went up so much the second we were able to use LanSchool. Now they constantly ask me to view their screen to make sure what they're doing is on track with my expectations."

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> **Lucille Rivera, Seventh grade English Language Arts teacher**

Nick said many teachers are also enjoying the Limit Web functionality that enables teachers to limit access to certain websites to keep kids from getting distracted, particularly during breakout groups or independent assignments.

Keeping students secure and networks safer

In addition to the safety features included with Lenovo devices and LanSchool software, Waterbury Public Schools also began utilizing a LanSchool partner security solution for web content filtering.

"We were using GoGuardian for content filtering but switched to this new offering and were able to reallocate the money we saved to purchasing Google G Suite Enterprise licenses," Nick said. "We were able to quickly implement the solution through the Google Admin console overnight, so students didn't miss a day of protection."

Web filtering is not just a nice tool to have in place – it's also required by the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), and for good reason. The more digitally connected students become, the more important it is to protect them and school networks from bullying, inappropriate content, malware, and other cyber threats.
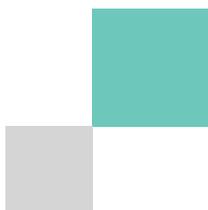
Preparing students for their futures

Like many from lower-income districts, Waterbury students' digital literacy and citizenship skills evolved greatly during the pandemic. "In Waterbury, we've had 21st century learners for a really long time, but we haven't had 21st century teachers," Mallory said. "Now we have been pushed to get up to speed on what our students need to be successful in today's modern world and society. The skills that they've acquired in these last six months are essential, basic skills." Lucille agreed: "The biggest thing kids have learned this year is how to use technology and troubleshoot on their own."

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"Going remote also brought out a new level of engagement among students who wouldn't normally speak up in class, thanks in large part to LanSchool," Lucille said. "We have a lot of kids who, if they were an introvert before, [going remote] just fueled the fire," she said. "On Google Meet, they were afraid to turn their camera on. They were afraid to unmute and talk. There was no way for me to communicate with them until LanSchool, where they can just send me a private message if they need help."

These digital literacy skills will play a big role in preparing students for college and their future careers. In fact, our Distance Learning in Review report shows teachers felt that the improvement to student's technology skills was the number one benefit of distance learning in the 2020-21 school year.

Moving forward with Lenovo and LanSchool, a one-stop shop

Whatever the future of learning holds, the IT team and teachers at Waterbury Public Schools are happy the district has successfully implemented a 1:1 program, supported by the power of Lenovo and LanSchool. Nick expects the district's use of Lenovo and LanSchool will continue beyond distance learning because it enables the district to be prepared. "Whether we are virtual, hybrid, or in-person, LanSchool allows us to be prepared for all situations. With LanSchool, we can enable our teachers to be as effective as you can be remotely, which is invaluable," he said. "That peace of mind will be great for teachers and administrators alike."

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> **Nick Chapman, Senior Network Specialist**

The teachers in his district agree. "Now that teachers are using LanSchool, they're raving about it. It's transforming their teaching — and they don't want to go back. Giving us that little sneak peek of how transformative LanSchool is has encouraged our district to seriously consider it as something we need to purchase moving forward," Mallory said.

Lucille added, "I don't think our kids could go back either. Like I said, my students rely on it just as much as I do for help. I think there's value in it on both sides for sure."

Get a free year of LanSchool with every qualifying Lenovo device

Purchasing Lenovo education devices is a great way to implement a 1:1 program on a budget, with the bonus of getting to try LanSchool Air for free. To take advantage of Lenovo's LanSchool bundle offer, get started here.

About LanSchool

As a pioneer and innovator of classroom management software, LanSchool helps teachers connect with students to create more meaningful online experiences, both in the classroom and remotely.

Backed by Lenovo and building on 30 years as an edtech leader, LanSchool helps guide learning, increase collaboration, and maximize teaching time. We've also partnered with best-in-class safety solutions because we believe student safety should be a given.

For more information, to start a trial, or receive a personalized 1:1 demo, visit *www.lanschool.com*.