Powering up the Chromebook Experience at Roxbury Public Schools

Case Study

New Jersey's Roxbury Township School District has been a 1:1 school for the past five years. Previously, the district had purchased Intel® Celeron®-based Acer* C720 Chromebook devices, which feature a touch interface. And though they had a very good experience with the C720, these devices were beginning to age after about four years. As Roxbury began their refresh process, they wanted to choose a "future-ready" device. For them, this meant not only a device that was touch-based but also one that would be powerful enough to support the learning tasks of the next few years ahead.

Challenge

"We were refreshing Chromebooks for our 1-to-1 program for grades 6 through 12 as well as our elementary carts," says Roxbury Township Director of Technology Teresa Rehman. "The majority of our Chromebooks were also EOL-ing as of June, 2019, so we were looking for replacements."

While Roxbury didn't know exactly what they wanted at first, they did know what they didn't want: a Chromebook with a 360' hinge.
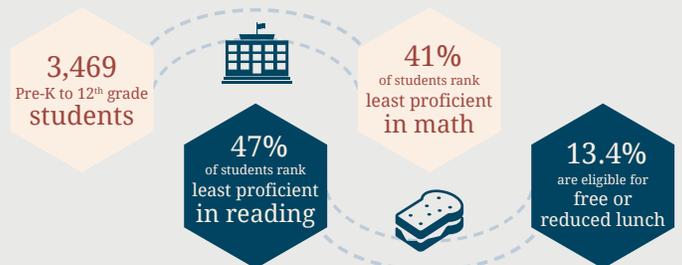
"Having a laptop that could flip 360' was worrisome for them, says Becky Monteiro, Account Manager with CDW.

Roxbury went through a few demonstrations and tryouts on a few different devices. They definitely wanted touchscreens, and not something that would flip all the way around. These criteria ultimately narrowed options down to just a few models.

According to Ms. Monteiro, the Roxbury deployment is one of the company's larger Intel® Core™-based Chromebook deployments, so the device had to be the perfect match.

"Roxbury are on the vanguard as far as adopting the Chromebook-based workflow goes," she explains. "So, they needed a device that could keep up with their robust curriculum."

The Roxbury Township School District is a community public school district in Roxbury Township, in Morris County, New Jersey.

3,469 Pre-K to 12th grade **students**

41% of students rank least proficient **in math**

47% of students rank least proficient **in reading**

13.4% are eligible for free or reduced lunch

The district's high school serves students from Roxbury, as well as those from Mount Arlington, who attend as part of a sending-receiving relationship.

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Solution

Roxbury tested a few different models until finally choosing the Acer* Chromebook 11 C771T-32GW with an Intel® Core™ i3 processor. The device features a touch screen and has a clamshell profile. Roxbury ended up purchasing 3,000 Chromebooks between January through July, 2018.

But why the Intel Core-based Acer C771T?

"Because of its performance and the fact that we want them to last at least four years," Ms. Rehman clarifies. "We were able to get a good price on the model and it still fit within our total budget number per Chromebook that we have had in place since we started experimenting in 2014." The build on the Acer C771T is solid—as is the key press—with a responsive touch-screen and track pad. Double cameras also make the device especially useful for STEM-based learning.

"We felt the ability to use Android apps would be another reason to get a more high-powered Chromebook," Ms. Rehman says.

"They wanted to buy the best," Ms. Monteiro adds. "Teresa had a budget: and she wanted to go with Intel Core i3 devices. So Acer worked with us, and we got within the price point they had. It was a no brainer."

Acer Chromebook 11 C771T-32GW with an Intel® Core™ i3 processor

Operating System	Chrome OS™
Processor & Chipset	Intel® Core™ i3
Processor Speed	2.30 GHz
Processor	Core Dual-core
Graphics Controller Model	HD Graphics 520
Screen Size	11.6"
Display Screen Type	LCD
Multi-touch Screen	Yes
Screen Resolution	1366 x 768
Standard Memory	4 GB
Memory Card Supported	microSD
Flash Memory Capacity	32 GB
Microphone	Yes
HDMI	Yes
Number of USB 3.0 Ports	2
Number of USB 3.1 Gen 1 Ports	1
Height	0.8"
Width	11.7"
Depth	8.2"
Weight (Approximate)	2.98 lbs.

Outcome

In terms of Roxbury's deployment model, grades 7-12 use a "take-home" model while grades 5-6 have access to Chromebooks from a cart. Recently—with the 2019-2020 school year—Roxbury has begun to provide access to grades 3-4 via carts. Another interesting point is that grades 1-2 (early elementary) have started to request access to Chromebooks, as well.

"They are performing well in our environment so far," Ms. Rehman says of how the new devices are faring in the trenches.

Roxbury did not purchase devices with a stylus though they are interested in doing so (especially for math classes) as the touch-recognition capability of Chromebooks has not met their initial expectations.

For high schoolers (especially grades 11-12), they are using Chromebooks all the way through graduation. They do not supplement with any other devices for computer science or other subjects, rather, they use

a VMware* solution (e.g., Horizon 7*) to access any sort of desktop applications that they might need.

"Roxbury uses a lot of Chrome and a lot of different applications," Ms. Monteiro explains. "They are certainly using them to do more than just doing Chromecasts. A lot of school districts simply want to jump on the bandwagon. Not Roxbury. At the end of day, Roxbury got what they needed to push learning further with the Acer C771T."