

Partnered for Success

IT Transformation at an Office of Education

Who They Are:

A Technology Services Department at a County-Level Office of Education in California

What They Do:

Provide centralized technology services for classroom and administration across multiple school districts

What That Includes:

- Networking Internet Services
- Computer Software Education
- Equipment Acquisition
- Educational Technology
- LAN

They're a small group of people doing amazing things.

"One of the rewards of what I do," says Alan McDonald, founder and CEO of AllConnected, "is that I get to know my customers.

"I get to be part of what they're doing. And sometimes what they're doing is just extraordinary."

When asked for an example, he mentions a regional Office of Education, whose Director of IT sought out AllConnected one year ago.

"He has just a small group of people working there," McDonald says, "but they're doing amazing things."

Reached over the phone, the Director of IT agrees with that assessment. "We're a staff of only 25 people. We're handling the IT needs for twenty school districts.

"That's over a hundred thousand students."

How do they meet the challenge? "By finding the right partners," he says.

"We can't do it all."

For school systems everywhere, the Director explains, there is a push today to integrate technology into the classroom.

Which means a lot more challenges for IT to solve.

But not a lot more staff. In fact, like many IT departments delivering enterprise-level solutions, his office has had to find ways to increase the services it delivers without growing its own staff at all.

"We provide a lot of services to our school districts," he says. "Financial systems, student information systems, internet access, end-user support."

"Sometimes we joke with ourselves, 'What have we got ourselves into?'"

"I'm proud of how much we accomplish. But we don't have the resources to manage it all by ourselves."

So they have chosen a solution that IT departments across multiple industries—from education and government to healthcare and banking—are embracing.

To extend their IT capacity, they team up with **Managed Service Providers**. These partnerships make it possible for them to undertake projects that would otherwise be out of reach.

Which is why finding the right Managed Service Provider can make a big difference.

"We built a massive communications system with such a small group of people."

One of the biggest changeovers that he oversaw in recent years was the transition to a new phone system.

"We moved from outdated 20-year-old phones to VoIP with Cisco. It was a big change. We didn't have the luxury of allocating staff to handle it all. We needed to hire a Managed Service Provider."

He knew what he was looking for. "We are looking for *partners*," he says. "Trusted advisors who share our vision. Who are unbiased and reliable."

He found the partner he wanted in AllConnected.

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“They came in and presented their managed services solution,” he explains. “One part of it was Smart Care.”

“The report and recommendations that they brought—it really blew us away.”

“We learned a lot about our infrastructure. What performance issues we have. What we need to update. What kind of downtime we’ll have to schedule. How we plan for the future.”

“Really, I was blown away.”

Now his office is working with AllConnected for an array of their IT needs.

“We were able to consolidate multiple service contracts to one umbrella contract. That saved us money.”

A key ingredient in that ongoing relationship is Smart Care—a support offering from Cisco which AllConnected incorporates in its full service offering. Smart Care simplifies network maintenance through proactive monitoring, diagnostics and repairs.

“Smart Care helps us be more aware and focused,” he says. “So expectations are clear on what we are doing quarterly, monthly, and yearly.”

“The technology is changing and we are facing that challenge.”

Looking forward, the Director is guardedly confident.

He knows that technology needs will continue to evolve. But having the right partnerships in place makes a difference. “It’s helped us make a real cultural shift in the way we operate.”

“We’re not just reacting to needs as they arise. We’re thinking about the future—and continuously, collaboratively, proactively, planning out the right steps and the right investments for getting us there.

“With Smart Care and AllConnected, we have a better handle on where we are—and where we’re going. We’re ready for growth. We’re ready for change.”

He laughs.

“We are in a better place than we were a year ago. We have a trusted advisor.
We made the right choice.”

Find out more:

You can learn more about AllConnected at www.allconnected.com.

You can learn more about Cisco Smart Care at www.cisco.com/go/smartcare.

If you are a Cisco partner who wants to optimize and evolve your network and customer relationships, go to www.cisco.com/go/optimizeandevolve.

