



Customer Case Study

# Creating a 21st Century Learning Environment



**Fort Dodge Community School District**



The Fort Dodge Community School District in Iowa is dedicated to serving the individual needs of each student from K – 12 in the Fort Dodge community and surrounding areas by providing students with opportunities that foster excellence and lifelong learning.

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## Highlights

### Challenges

- Aging network infrastructure unable to support modern needs.
- Insufficient IT framework for a new middle school facility.
- Required scalable, robust, and cost-effective solutions for 1,100 students and 400 staff.

# Challenges

Fair Oaks Middle School (grades 5 and 6) and Phillips Middle School (grades 7 and 8) had been dealing with issues ranging from parking to security and insufficient space for expansion, while ongoing costs for maintenance and renovation were only getting higher. After an extensive analysis of both buildings, Fort Dodge Community School District made the choice to bring them together into a new middle school that had better accommodations for growth and a 21st century learning environment to help students stay competitive among their peers in the state of Iowa. The engineering and construction of the new facility was designed and coordinated to physically support and optimize the school environment; however, the challenges of creating and developing an IT infrastructure required another new blueprint entirely.

The goal was to provide a 21st century learning and working environment with advanced Information Technology that would create a scalable, robust and cost-effective network in the new Fort Dodge Middle School. “We required a network that could support the work of the staff and the education of the students,” explains Pearson. “The administration relies heavily on technology for their daily operations, and the teachers and students depend on it in the classroom. We needed it to be reliable and robust.”



## Solution

- Deployed HP 8200 zl and 5400 zl switches for a high-performance, scalable network.
- Leveraged US Signal's expertise to implement advanced PoE and secure IT infrastructure.
- Provided IT consulting to optimize long-term strategy and ensure data protection.

## Results

- Reliable, scalable network for staff and students.
- Enhanced learning experience with advanced technology.
- Streamlined administrative operations and improved security.
- Long-term partnership with US Signal for ongoing IT success.

With 1,100 students and 400 employees moving into the new Fort Dodge Middle School, Pearson knew that a secure and flexible network infrastructure for the school meant having a sufficient amount of ports, virtual desktops with reliable coverage and capacity, Power over Ethernet (PoE) protocols, and most importantly, a network switch series that could support high-density connectivity. He had the blueprint laid out, but it was a matter of bringing in the hardware and software professionals to optimize the solutions for an IT infrastructure that needed to nearly double in size from the original layout for the separate schools. Pearson reached out to US Signal® IT Solutions for help.



**They have a reputation among the North Central Iowa school “districts for their customer service and reliability.”**

## Solution

When Pearson approached US Signal with the plans for the new school, he knew he wanted HP to replace the aging network infrastructure. HP delivers innovative products and creates solutions that are practical, usable and valuable for its customers at an affordable price. US Signal and HP worked together to design and develop a framework that would be the best fit for the project requirements. A secure IT infrastructure that ensures data and resources are accessible, available and scalable meant an optimized learning and working environment for both staff and students. After a thorough and comprehensive IT assessment, US Signal leveraged advanced PoE technology to provide high connectivity for networked devices. With high-availability services and reliable power, the school can leverage a robust hardware environment that supports high-performance processes at every level. In addition, US Signal and HP decided to deploy HP 8200 zl and 5400 zl Switch Series into the new network for advanced intelligent switches that allow for a

scalable yet granular framework. This solution also supports the most demanding networking features such as Quality of Service (QoS) and security. With the expertise and experience of US Signal and the IT hardware of HP, it was the perfect partnership to provide the best possible solution.

The benefits of working with US Signal are no secret among schools in the region. “I heard about US Signal from other school districts in the area that used them for virtualization, storage, backup and disaster recovery services. They have a reputation among the North Central Iowa school districts for their customer service and reliability. I chose them as our IT services provider back in 2010 and continue to work with them today,” said Pearson. “They understood the importance of technology in education. They didn’t just drop off the hardware and make sure it worked. They looked at the overall IT strategy and made recommendations I hadn’t even considered. They truly care about the success of their customers.”



**“US Signal IT Solutions always kept our best interests in mind. They helped us find solutions that would support our already existing infrastructure, then went the extra mile to offer solutions that we never even thought to plan into our IT strategy.”**

**Jeremy Pearson  
Supervisor of IT,  
Fort Dodge Community School District**

## Results

US Signal and HP provided the hardware and software that was needed for a scalable, robust and cost-effective network in the new Fort Dodge Middle School; however, US Signal went above and beyond with IT consulting to ensure the infrastructure would be optimized for the long-term goals and IT strategy of the school district.

“HP recognizes the importance of a partner like US Signal who focuses on delivering outstanding value to the customer,” said David Eichenauer, HP Partner Business Manager. “HP heavily relies on top-tier partners like US Signal to invest in training and certifications in order to deliver cutting-edge solutions to our mutual customers and US Signal always hits the mark. That’s why US Signal is an HP Platinum partner – our highest designation.”

Since leveraging the advanced technology and professional expertise of US Signal and HP, Fort Dodge Middle School has created a better learning and working environment for the staff and students. The students and teachers have access to advanced technology that enhances

the learning experience in classrooms, while the administrative staff is able to streamline communication and collaboration for an efficient and productive workplace. With solutions that guarantee data protection and a secure school and work environment, Fort Dodge Middle School can worry less about managing IT and focus more on maintaining the high-quality education and work environment that continues to keep the Fort Dodge School District a leader in the region.

With the technology provided by HP and US Signal, Fort Dodge Middle School now has the resources and capabilities to carry out its commitment to the students it serves. Fort Dodge Middle School is creating lifelong learners who believe in themselves by providing bigger opportunities for a brighter future.





# Digital Infrastructure Solutions Built for Your Business



**US Signal, established in 2001, is a premier national digital infrastructure company that operates a fully owned fiber network to deliver a wide range of advanced digital solutions. Our offerings include robust cloud services, secure colocation facilities, high-performance connectivity, comprehensive hardware resale, and managed IT services, empowering businesses to enhance their operational efficiency through tailored network, data center, data protection, and cybersecurity solutions.**