

Maine Township High School District 207

Impact portraits: Success stories with Google for Education

Maine Township High School District 207, located in the Chicago suburbs, was one of the earliest adopters of Google Workspace for Education in a K–12 educational context. Now, it's a district with one Chromebook for each student and teacher. Over the past eight years, Maine Township High School District 207 embraced technology in multiple aspects of their curriculum while giving teachers sufficient training and time to integrate Chromebooks and Google Workspace for Education at their own pace. The Chromebooks also work to bridge the digital divide. In a school district where a third of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch, the Chromebook is their day-to-day tool for getting things done. As a result, test scores remain steady despite outside factors (such as an increase of students from low-income households) that typically cause a decline.

District facts (Public school district)



Total district enrollment

6,300 Students
417 Teachers (FTE)



Grades served

9>12



Free/reduced price lunch

29% of students qualify



Number of schools

15 Total (3 Large high schools,
2 Academies)



Ethnicity

60% White
21% Hispanic/Latino
14% Asian
2% Black/African American
2% Two or more races



Google tools

7,500 Chromebooks
5 years using Chromebooks
8 years using Google
Workspace for Education
100% Students using Google
Workspace for Education

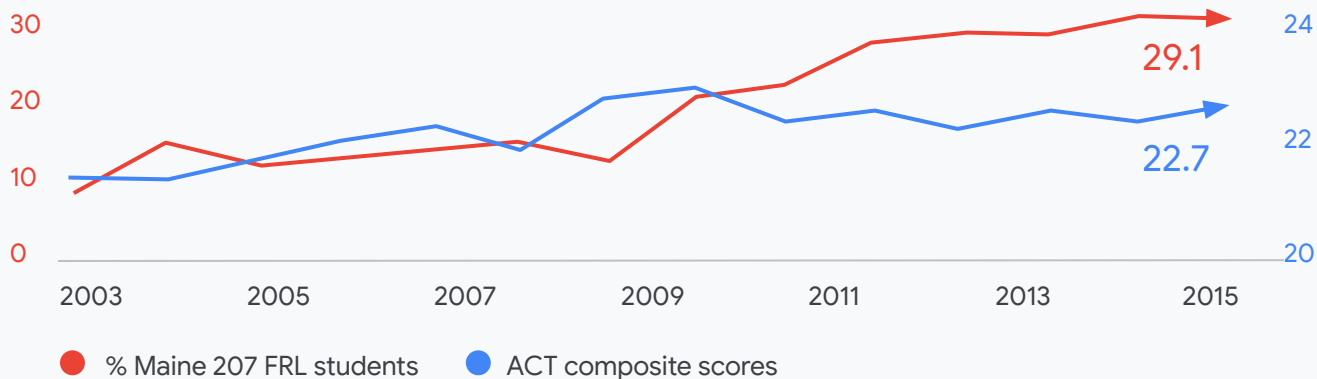
Why Chromebooks

It helps students even outside of class: more than 60% of the students use a Chromebook as their primary computing device when they are at home.

When each student has a Chromebook, teachers can use quick formative assessments at the beginning of class or as homework to pinpoint specific gaps in knowledge and skills, even if students won't ask for help.

Students receive support for their Chromebooks at student-run help desks called the ChromeDepot, where students learn real-life skills such as customer service, computer repair, and how to train others.

As Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL) student population grew, ACT scores continued to outperform



Results

The administrative leadership in Maine 207 believes Google Workspace for Education and Chromebooks are central to the success of the students in the district. According to Dr. Mike Pressler, East High School Principal, “This is about weaving technology into everything we do—especially differentiating instruction and students collaborating. Educational technology is a tool, not a strategy.” The district used ACT scores as the main measure of student educational attainment, because until recently, all high school students in Illinois took the ACT. Scores from 2015 show that both Maine 207’s average scores in each subject area and Maine 207’s composite scores are higher than the state and national averages. ACT scores stayed constant over the past several years as Maine 207’s demographics changed, with an increase in low-income populations accompanying an increase in racial and ethnic diversity. The increase in low-income students made Chromebooks even more valuable: more than 60% of the students use a Chromebook as their primary computing device when they are at home. “The ability to collaborate with peers from anywhere, and to do that with



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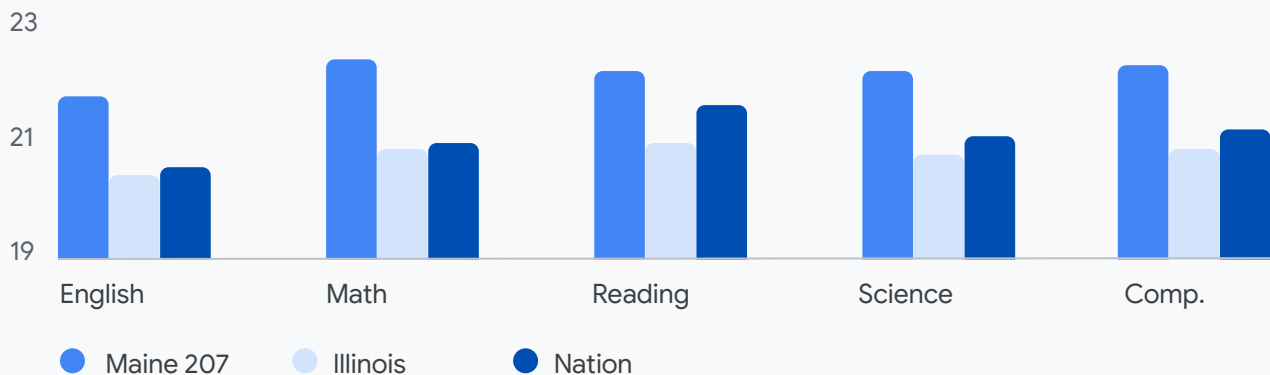
Dr. Mike Pressler, Maine East High School Principal

teachers, is not only unprecedented, it’s truly life-changing,” says Jason Klein, Assistant Superintendent of Technology and Learning of Maine Township High School District 207. The decrease in the income level of students’ families that Maine 207 experienced typically results in falling test scores. However, the district maintained high ACT scores even as the student population changed. Hank Thiele, the former Assistant Superintendent of Technology and Learning at Maine 207, explains “We constantly get better. The way we use Google and other technology to support teachers allows us to improve.”

60%+

of students use their Chromebook as primary computing device at home

ACT scores from 2015: compares Maine 207 scores with state and national averages



How they got there

Maine Township High School District 207 is a district of 6,300 students in three high schools located in the Chicago suburbs. The district was among the earliest K-12 educational users of Google Workspace for Education, starting in the Fall of 2008, when they began rolling out software to students. A rollout for staff followed in 2009. The district piloted the use of Chromebooks in a limited deployment of 400 over

the next few years, but teachers were frustrated by the limitations of learning labs and device carts. Teachers and district leaders both felt increasing the number of devices to allow access all day would make digital instruction grow and improve. In 2013, students in grades nine and ten received the first 4,000 Chromebooks. The district added Chromebooks to reach all students in the ensuing years.

The switch to digital texts saves money and back pain—Chromebooks are significantly lighter than textbooks



The freedom to choose

District leaders found that when every student had a device, it changed how teachers and students thought about technology and digital resources. The district gave teachers the opportunity and support to teach with Chromebooks and Google Workspace for Education without forcing changes in pedagogy in individual classrooms. “We think these are a critical set of skills. Not just to use cool tools, but to be able to create, problem-solve and collaborate,” says Klein. In many cases, the district found this approach gave reluctant teachers room to go at their own pace. Once teachers had a greater comfort level, the approach assuaged worries they had regarding the use of Chromebooks.

Differentiated learning

Although teachers “took the temperature” of the class well before devices were present, Chromebooks and Google Forms make the process far more efficient. Teachers can use quick formative assessments at the beginning of class or as homework to pinpoint specific gaps in knowledge and skills, even if students won’t speak up and ask for help. “Google Workspace for Education allows students to have a voice in their learning even if they’re shy or quiet. It allows students who process information differently to do so at their own pace,” says Klein. One teacher explained she used a pre-assessment and found that half of the students didn’t understand a key concept, so she changed the plan for what she covered in that day’s class period.

Challenges become opportunities

Students in Maine 207 receive support for their Chromebooks at student-run help desks called the ChromeDepot. Many of these student “Tech Geniuses” explain that they learn real-life skills such as customer service, computer repair, and how to train others. These student leaders are essential, ensuring that students and staff get help when they need technology-related assistance. Moreover, it puts the students in the new role of helping teachers, linking tech support with improvements in student college and career skills.



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Jason Klein, Assistant Superintendent

