

CASE STUDY:
CFISD

PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

- > Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District (CFISD) engaged iSphere to provide a project framework to support their \$90,000,000 Technology Bond for IT infrastructure improvements across the district.
- > The strategic framework for managing the 2014 Bond Technology Infrastructure projects required the conception of a high-level infrastructure, definition and development of vendor management processes, internal staff training, SharePoint design, Office 365 training, as-well-as external vendor training, management, and portal design.
- > The district's fast-paced, agile approach required daily monitoring as the tenants of the IT improvement goals constantly evolved.

iSphere's team managed projects, vendors, and executive reporting to ensure Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District's \$90,000,000 bond and e-rate funded technology upgrade moved forward in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Transformational Technology at Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District

THE CLIENT

CFISD is the third-largest school district in Texas and the 25th largest in the nation. And within Harris County it is the second-largest district in terms of student enrollment—second only to Houston ISD. In fact, companies transferring personnel to the Houston area often recommend the district as a desirable one in which to educate their children.

Over the years, this phenomenal growth called for the passage of a number of bonds in order to build more facilities to accommodate the increasing student population. The objective of the District's most recent bond was to fulfill the needs of the long range technology goals set out by the Texas Education Agency and the District's own internal planning committee.

THE CHALLENGE

CFISD undertook an improvement plan for managing their Technology Bond projects which eventually gave rise to a strategic framework touching every facet of their infrastructure.

- Enterprise High Speed Wireless
- Network Infrastructure
- Cabling, Power, Air Conditioning
- Data Center Upgrades
- Administrative Staff Technology
- Technology for New Schools
- Instructional Technology

This expansive public bond and e-rate funded technology transformation would eventually result in designing an architecture that fulfilled the district's needs through the year 2020.

THE SOLUTION

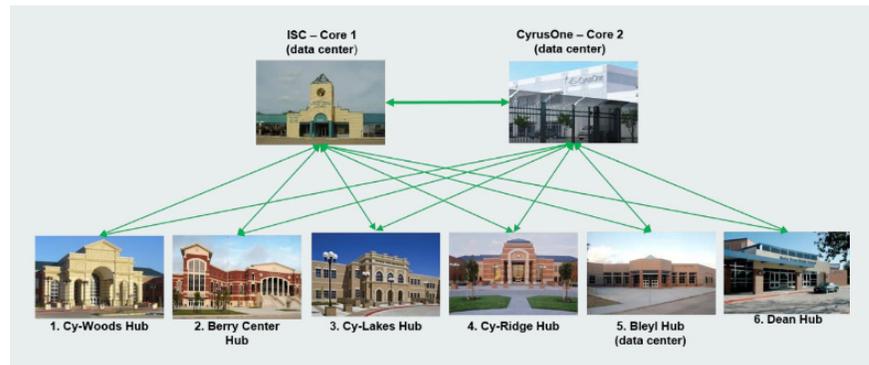
The projects required introducing the district IT staff to industry best practices for program and project management, and then adapting those principles to their internal culture. As the bulk of the projects kicked-off, iSphere brought in a team of three experienced program managers to assist with developing individual Project Charters, Change Management and Vendor Management processes. iSphere facilitated program level meetings communicating roles and responsibilities to over 15 vendors which included the review of assumptions, requirements, and scheduled activities.



The iSphere project managers were responsible for program metrics, forecasting, and tracking vendor milestones. Throughout the engagement, they shared project management best practices and provided guidance with SharePoint and the Microsoft Office suite. Additionally, the iSphere team trained vendors on how to adjust their own reporting to use the district's existing reporting standards.

With the processes in place, more vendors were on-boarded with their own project managers and the iSphere team adapted to accommodate the new members. Ultimately, the bulk of iSphere's work was on two bond goals, Goal Three and Goal Five.

Goal Three upgraded network cabling, fiber optic connectivity, power, and network closets in the schools, service centers, hub connections, and data centers. Goal Five was to replace the district's telephone system with Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).



ABOUT iSphere

iSphere is a Texas-based IT services firm that partners with clients to provide the necessary resources to meet critical IT and business goals. Partnering with our clients, we always put performance excellence and client loyalty first.

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THE RESULTS

According to the State of Texas Long-Range Plan for Technology the district's long-term goal is, "Developing a plan for educational technology through 2020 requires systematic planning and step-by-step strategies implemented over time to make the vision a reality."

The iSphere team managed projects, vendors, and executive reporting to ensure Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District's \$90,000,000, bond and e-rate funded, technology upgrade move forward in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Our project managers created and executed schedules to meet frequently changing requirements; were responsible for day-to-day operations for this large-scale IT transformation project. They coordinated activities between the District personnel and vendors for implementation of several hundred Cisco Catalyst switches, over 8,500 Aruba wireless access points in classrooms, and over 300 miles of network cabling in 100 schools. They served as central point of contact for internal team and vendor business reviews which included risk analysis that explained significant milestones important to their projects; managed stakeholders and executive communication with the CTO and Directors to drive team alignment, which included daily and weekly updates.