

CASE STUDY

TWIN CITIES GERMAN IMMERSION SCHOOL

530 students | K-8 | St. Paul, MN



WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED
UMBRELLA SYSTEMS

\$110K

E-RATE RECOVERED

\$350/MO

FIBER INTERNET

45 MIN

AVG RESPONSE

THE SITUATION

TCGIS had one IT person for ten years. He was employed directly by the school, worked alone, and operated on his own timeline. Tickets sat. Phones went unanswered in the afternoon. The network ran, but nothing improved — and when things broke, they stayed broken longer than they should have.

"Our IT was fine. It was not great, but it was fine. We were looking for more expertise and more higher-level assistance."

— ELIZABETH, PRINCIPAL

Staff had learned to work around problems instead of reporting them. There was no asset tracking, no E-Rate participation, no infrastructure roadmap. The school was paying full price for everything and getting a fraction of what was possible. Management felt it most — the people who needed IT decisions made couldn't get someone on the phone.

In the summer of 2024, TCGIS made the switch.

WHAT WE DID

Week one: We walked the building. Every switch, access point, camera, and door controller — documented. The outgoing tech cooperated with the handoff, and we built a real baseline of where things stood. The MDF switches went first — they weren't adequate for the load.

The first month was a sprint. TCGIS had ordered 60 new MacBooks and needed every one deployed before teachers returned. We built an asset tracking system from scratch — serial numbers, assigned users, repair status, warranty dates — because none of that existed. We audited Google Workspace, cleaned up years of orphaned accounts and broken permissions, and did the same for door access.

Then the first week of school hit. A thunderstorm knocked out power and internet for the entire building. Comcast quoted a week and a half. We overnight-ordered a Starlink and had it installed in two days — \$300 for hardware, \$100 for labor. Students were back online while Comcast was still dispatching trucks.

Over the next six months, we replaced every camera with a UniFi system — eliminating an annual license fee that cost more than the hardware swap. We pulled all vendor contracts into a single tracking system. We identified \$130,000 in E-Rate Category 2 funding that TCGIS had never used and was about to expire.

That summer, we put every dollar to work: 170 new data drops, distributed network closets, new access points, battery backups the school had never had, and a fiber internet upgrade. TCGIS paid roughly \$40,000 out of pocket. E-Rate covered the remaining \$110,000.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE NOW

Austin is on-site three mornings a week. He walks the building, sits in operational meetings, handles tickets in person, and picks up the phone between 7 AM and 8 PM. TCGIS doesn't call a printer company when the printer breaks. They call Austin. He calls the printer company. One person to contact, one person who already knows the building, the staff, and the network.

"I thought we would lose the personal connection."
— ELIZABETH'S FEAR GOING IN

"This new organization is incredibly reachable."
— ELIZABETH NOW

"We feel very stable. Our network has improved due to the proactive wiring. There has been pushback in the past on certain tasks, likely due to limitations in ability. We don't feel that anymore." And the E-Rate savings — a first for the school. "We are taking advantage of E-Rate and some savings for the first time."

BY THE NUMBERS

	BEFORE UMBRELLA	AFTER UMBRELLA
E-Rate	None	\$110,000 recovered
Internet	700 Mbps coax, \$480/mo	1 Gbps fiber, \$350/mo
Asset Tracking	None	Full inventory, 410+ devices
Cameras	Annual license fees	UniFi — no recurring cost
IT Response	Afternoon calls unanswered	45-min avg first response
On-Site Presence	Variable	3 mornings/week, every week

"GIVE IT A TRY FOR A YEAR. YOU WILL WANT TO SIGN FOR FIVE YEARS AFTER THAT."
— ELIZABETH, PRINCIPAL, TWIN CITIES GERMAN IMMERSION SCHOOL