Acer Chromebook Repair Course Helps High Schoolers Explore Learning Pathways

The Acer Service eLearning Repair Program provides North Carolina students with skills to repair school computers and pursue future careers

When students at Pioneer Springs Community School requested hands-on computer repair training a few years ago, administrators found an Acer online program that does that and more for the North Carolina public charter school.

"We try to connect students to our communities—both our school community and the one beyond our school," says Heidi Magi, Pathways Coordinator for Pioneer Springs, explaining the school's approach to place-based education.

Pioneer Springs is a nature-based charter school that was founded in 2012 in Charlotte, and serves 440 students in grades K-12.

"We hoped that by offering basic technology repair, we could provide students with marketable skills and also empower them to support our school community's IT needs," Magi says.

Fun while learning

The Acer Service eLearning Repair Program covers Chromebook functions, component replacement, post-repair quality assurance and hardware reconfiguration during its eight weeks of training. The learning modules include videos, resource materials and assessments, with much of the instruction gamified with points, badges and leaderboards.

At Pioneer Springs, the course is offered to high school students as part of the school's Pathways program, which requires students to choose one of five interdisciplinary academic focuses. The Acer course is an option within "Design the Future," alongside courses in architecture, engineering and graphic design.

"Each year, our high school students complete a Pathways course that enables them to do meaningful hands-on work with a real-world connection," Magi says. "We don't have a dedicated IT professional, so our students who get certified in Acer repair do basic repairs for the school community and also support our teachers, who have different skills and comfort levels when it comes to using technology."

Real-world applications

The benefits of the self-paced course have been significant, Magi says, noting improved soft skills—time management, planning and organization, staying on task—as well as technology skills.

"Understanding how the Chromebooks are put together and how they function also benefits the students as Chromebook users," she says. Magi points to her daughter as an example, recalling that after completing the course last year, she repaired her own Acer Chromebook at home.

"The students interested in technology really liked the program, whether they decided to pursue a career in that area or not," Magi says. "They thought it was well organized and easy to use."

About 55 students have completed the Acer program in the two years it has been offered. Students who opt for Acer certification—accomplished by completing the eLearning course and demonstrating mastery of skills—can complete on-campus internships of three hours a week for credit. But

even those who don't get certified have benefited from the experience, Magi says.

"I had a couple students who said, 'I didn't think this would be interesting, but it was interesting.' Or 'I didn't think I would be good at this, but it turns out that I am,'" she says. "On the flip side, we had students who thought they wanted to work in IT in the future, but after going through the program realized it wasn't the right track for them. It definitely helps with career decisions."

Community support

Selecting the repair program developed by Acer was easy, Magi says, because about 100 of the school's 170 Chromebooks are made by the company, and Acer has been a supportive partner.

"We are so grateful to have an opportunity to participate in this," Magi says. "Some teachers were hesitant to teach the course because they don't have experience in computer repair, so they appreciated that it was very organized, and the students didn't need extra support to understand the material."

For more information, go to www.acer.com/us-en/education/index.html or contact Acer at edu.pa@acer.com